

HISTORY OF THE ESOTERIC ORDERS

Original Text of Santiago Bovisio – Translation from Spanish
© 2011 CAFH - all rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	The Legends of the Esoteric Orders	3
2.	Esoteric Arabic Wisdom and the Veiled Woman	6
3.	Ancient Egypt	8
4.	The Temple of Initiation	12
5.	Amon in the Hellenic Schools	15
6.	King Arthur, the Holy Grail, and the Round Table and its Knights .	18
7.	Ancient Initiation Ceremonies of Knights	23
8.	The Guardians of Eternity	29
9.	The Trials of Initiation	31
10.	The Christian Military Orders	37
11.	The Court of Catherine de Medici	40
12.	The Astrological Orders	43
13.	The Schools of Magic	47
14.	Martinism	49
15.	Saint-Germain and the Rosicrucians	52
16.	The French Revolution and the Liberal Lodges	54

The Legends of the Esoteric Orders

1st Teaching

Amid thunder, lightning, and flames, Michael, the Leader of the Host of Fire, had purified a Sacred Mountain. For centuries, a volcanic fire of terrible force glowed within that mountain, spewing burning lava and rocks which formed an impenetrable circle.

Anyone who had tried to reach that mountain would have had to walk eastward through unhealthy, swampy and inhospitable regions. They would then come upon a rolling green landscape, sloping gently to the shore of a lake. The still and transparent saltwater of that lake meekly hid the fury which was let loose on stormy days.

Further on, an immense cliff, a chasm of untold depths, would cause the traveler to lose all hope of finding a path to reach the volcano which lifted its proud face off in the distance. This volcano was perpetually crowned with fire. White clouds covered its base, which was hidden in the depths of the abyss.

Centuries passed. Floods fell upon the earth. The planet was repeatedly shaken with terrible convulsions. And then, calm returned.

A layer of snow shrouded the swamps. The saltwater lake dried up, becoming a sandy desert. The cliff was steeper, and the volcano of the Sacred Mountain appeared to be dead forever.

Where was Michael with his resplendent Hosts? Where was his crown of fire, flame, radiance and death?

The fiery force still lived in the bowels of the Mountain. And even though the flames were not visible, one could still feel life boiling and bubbling within.

Then, one luminous, marvelous day, when a rainbow stretched across the sky from horizon to horizon, a procession of human beings, clothed in white, stepped for the first time upon that virgin spot, as yet untrodden by human foot.

But...were they human beings? Were they angels? Who were they?

Those who led the procession were slim, beardless youths with dreamy, feverish eyes, who walked slowly. Youthful emotion was curbed, but not yet completely mastered. Despite their slow pace, it was evident in the rapid movements of their heads.

More mature beings followed. They were strong, grave, and beautiful. Their eyes were half-closed, and their hands were as white as the dead.

At the end of this mystical procession were elders, whose snow-white hair floated in the wind. The only resemblance they bore to human beings was their external appearance.

But who could understand their language—the speech they used within the circle they formed at the foot of the Mountain?

The elders spoke the language of the gods, and only their disciples could understand them. They pointed out a path on the Mountain. They indicated the hollows in the rocks which would be the disciples' cells and dwelling places; the stones embedded in the mountain which would be their seats and gathering places. These were nests for eagles, nests for saints.

The atmosphere was permeated with the solemnity which always announces life or death. One of those beings had a great sealed book in his hand: it was the Divine Mother's Book.

At nightfall, they sang a chant. The notes of that mystical hymn rose serenely from earth to heaven, like the cry of the Mother awakening from sleep to face eternity. The elders floated into the air, and then gradually they rose up, enveloped in clouds and splendor. They disappeared amidst the veils of night before the eyes of the disciples who peered into the shadows.

That was the Temple, the sanctuary, and the school. Like a swarm of bees, these beings burrowed into the Mountain, penetrating into its interior. They built their round Temple on the mouth of the still-hot crater. They wrote the Mother's Name and Sign upon the highest peak of that Mountain.

Upon the walls of those cells of living rock were written the esoteric teachings, as well as the realization of each disciple of the great Initiates of those early times.

And when a disciple rose into the air to go in search of his Master, another disciple replaced him in his cell in the Temple of the Mountain.

How many years went by? How many human beings dwelled in that solitude? How many souls rose to the summit of the mountain and understood the mystery of the Mantras?

But a voice was heard: Kaor is dead! There is no more fire in the Mountain. Tomorrow it will fall forever.

Once again, those beings walked in a white line, in solemn procession towards Egypt.

Who would master the world?

Would it be the noise of the destruction and seismic movement which buried Kaor in the abyss? Or would it be the Song of Eternity which those beings chanted as they walked onward without looking back; always looking ahead, towards the future, towards new beings, towards new things: towards realization?

The sea and the desert are brothers: both guard the relics of past times and the history of lost civilizations. They are like God, who hides the marvels of His Presence beneath his mantle during his passage through the world.

At the edges of the sea and the borders of deserts, there always live strange races of men, who are somewhat savage, somewhat enclosed within themselves, and mistrustful of other mortals. They are true guardians of the rocks or the undulating dunes.

In the middle of the Sahara, in a part of the desert which preserves a fragment of lost Atlantis, there lived a race of human beings who were completely different from everyone else.

Once, they had been worshippers of stone tablets, bathed in milk and oil. Later on, they belonged to the Prophet's sect. But their true religion was to guard a square black table, a remembrance of an extremely ancient esoteric Table.

These were the descendants of those original masters of the Mountains of Kaor.

Esoteric Arabic Wisdom and the Veiled Woman

2nd Teaching

In the East, women were not only admitted into the Order but they could also hold the highest offices. About twenty-five hundred years ago, a woman directed the Table of Hoggard. Her name was Abbhumi.

She was a high entity who had descended for the last time into the physical world in human form. Thus, she was like a symbol, a summary of the passing mental era which was giving way to the dawning era of Christian feeling.

Abbhumi was “the bodiless woman” because her body was so pure and perfect. She was trained from childhood to become the priestess of Wisdom.

The white-turbaned Knights, with their camel mounts and billowing capes, taught her the seven languages, the seven powers, and the seven magic formulas.

What else could a living being aspire to than to fortify itself within that mystical castle which is its single abode—the place where wisdom and knowledge are its sustenance, and where neither love nor human breath can tarnish its sacred walls?

Abbhumi’s mother died when giving birth to her. Her father adored and venerated her, but their love was just an affectionate understanding of the mind.

Abbhumi’s heart was as cold and white as the summit of Mount Meru. For her, death, pain, misery, love, and human pleasures were illusory expressions of the Mother’s veils.

Will she be one of the select souls who, throughout the centuries, have conquered the fruit of purest wisdom in order to live an esoteric life?

One day, lost in a desert mirage, two travelers approached on their camels. Hunger, weariness, desperation, weakness and impending madness were about to overtake them.

Oschar, the compassionate one, asked to help them, but the Mother of the desert answered, “*Let the law of the desert be fulfilled.*”

Once again, the compassionate one implored, “*Mother, allow me to save them.*”

She answered, “*Save their flesh if you wish, and save their souls if you can.*”

The Arab quickly raced with his camels to save them and take them to Hoggard.

Why did the Mother answer the disciple’s plea, and receive and visit with the strangers?

A new feeling had awakened in her. Her soul had gazed upon another soul who looked at her imploringly and sorrowfully. She felt pity, and stunned, she asked herself, “*Is this human love?*”

“*Oh Mother, where is your wisdom?*”

“Of what use are the secrets you know if you cannot master the feelings of pity awakened within you and which ride unrestrained upon the clouds of illusion?”

Abbhumi would now understand the pain of human beings, and their bitter hours, and she will suffer thinking of how to help them.

Hoggard was in mourning, and the Sacred Seal abandoned. The sages were desolate because the mother was not lighting her lamp each day.

“Let the culprit die!”

Oskar tried unsuccessfully to save him, and warn the Mother. The soul was worth more than the body, and the stranger had to die.

Nonetheless, this death did not restore Abbhumi’s ancient Wisdom, because a new channel had been opened in her heart: that of feeling.

A new current had sprung forth: with Wisdom, there was now Love.

From then on, the Esoteric Orders were divided into two great currents of force: Knowledge and Love. Knowledge predominates in the polytheistic conception of God, and the cult of the sciences. Love predominates in the monotheistic conception of God, and the cult of the salvation of humanity.

Ancient Egypt

3rd Teaching

We must once again ask the ancient and ever-present question: Is there a Creator God or not? And this must be answered clearly, thoughtfully and conscientiously.

Near the close of the 19th century, the friends of a well-known biologist were gathered in the anteroom of his burial chamber. As happens with a famous person, these friends had different viewpoints. A Catholic, talking with an old gentleman, expressed his grief over the fact that the dying man had not reconciled himself with God. The old gentleman asked, “Do you believe that he is far from God?” The Catholic answered “yes”, since the biologist had been an atheist and had led many onto the path of disbelief. The old man pressed further, “How can you believe that such a great being, someone so knowledgeable about human beings and nature, can be far from God?”

Yet, are there atheists? We are not referring to people who say they are without having reflected upon it, and perhaps are incapable of doing so. We are referring to those who are deeply concerned with this issue.

Those who believe in God can be divided into two types. The first type includes those who believe in a Creator God who is outside of and different from them. They cannot reach this God, but they will be able to unite with Him. The second type consists of those who believe that the “I” is part of the Unity, of God, and is able to merge with Him through expansion.

It is time to outline the *raison d'être* of the monotheistic and polytheistic currents. Claiming that the former believed in only one God, and the latter in many, does not explain much.

When the Aryan race—heir of the Atlanteans—developed the individual and rational personality, it needed to anchor itself to the “I”. The projection of the “I” resulted in monotheism. A perfect human being needed the most perfect primordial mold: God.

Since this “I” either connected to or opposed the surrounding world and the unknown forces within itself, monotheism naturally degenerated into a personal God. However, the Aryan Mind, with its power of reason, had laid a bridge between instinct and intuition. And in doing so, it was able to build countless images similar to the one it had formed. All were more or less perfect representations of the divine mold. This is how souls were led to polytheism.

Once the process of densification of the being is complete, and the “I” has descended, it tends to unite itself with other separate entities. That is, it tends towards expansion, and this leads to polytheism. The “I” individualizes aspects of the external world with which it wants to unite.

The fundamental thing to take into account is that the Unmanifested expresses itself through the Manifested, and the Manifested serves as the seat of the Unmanifested.

As the Aryans refined their own “I”, they perfected their monotheistic belief. And as they improved their potential for similitude, they developed and perfected their polytheistic belief.

The polytheistic cult reached its highest expression in Egypt, prior to the rise of the personal cult of Osiris. The priests developed the mind to acquire increasingly more knowledge. Unlike the monotheists, they conceived of love as something more elevated and divine. Many of these

priests were of royal blood, and for thousands of years the Pharaohs always married blood relatives. They believed that if they failed to do so, they would lose their divine and royal power. And this eventually happened.

The polytheism of the priests of Amon coexisted with the monotheistic cult which predominated during the reign of the black nomads in Asia and Africa.

The esoteric teachings of both currents were preserved, and their strict rites practiced in the Temples of the Priests of Amon, as well as in the Temples of the Priests of Mitanni, Kush, Punt and others.

But these two forces were destined to engage in a struggle for predominance. This took place in the times of Akhenaton, the first historical figure of the great era of Egypt, when a religious war, known as the War of the Two Suns, broke out.

The first symptoms of the religious crisis appeared in Egypt during the XVIII Dynasty and led to the War of the Two Suns: Amon and Aton.

Thutmose IV married an Asian princess from Mitanni. The importance of the changes that followed can be attributed to this Asian influence. When Amenophis IV, his grandson, rose to the throne c. 1353 BC, he started the struggle against the Temple of Amon. Neither he nor his wife, Nefertiti—also of Asian origin—took the traditional oath to the God Amon. That is why he was later called the heretic Pharaoh. Amenophis was 12 years old when he became Pharaoh, and he immediately and openly showed his preference for the Single God which he called Sun Aton. He later took the name Akhenaton, meaning “Aton is satisfied”.

The esoteric monotheistic school was gaining a foothold: the concepts of a Single God and a universal brotherhood were inspiring. The religion of Aton did not worship images, but only a solar disk whose extending rays ended in hands which held the Ankh, symbol of life. The school of Amon, with its grand hierarchies, and its cult of many deities, was banned. Its worshippers were persecuted, and its immense wealth confiscated. Its priests were either exiled or went into hiding. The long-haired priests of Aton replaced the shaven priests of Amon.

Art underwent a great evolution at this time. The symbolic and hieratic figures were replaced by real, living ones. However, the Pharaoh was now beginning to be represented as larger than the other figures. Tiye, Akhenaton’s mother, appears to have secretly sympathized with her son’s tendencies.

Akhenaton’s first daughter, Meritaten, was born in the fifth year of his reign. Until then, other deities were found side by side with Aton. But this state of affairs would not last, for the Pharaoh engaged in open conflict with the priests of Amon-Ra. We can deduce the moderating influence of Tiye from the fact that the clash occurred shortly after her death.

Akhenaton decided to abandon Thebes and build the City of the Horizon of Aton (Luxor) in order to better worship his God. With Thebes relegated to a provincial status, the priesthood of Amon was weakened.

This is when the Pharaoh changed his name from Amenophis—Peace of Amon—to Akhenaton.

The new city was built on an island in the Nile, some 250 km to the south of present-day Cairo.

Shortly afterwards, Meketaten—Protected by Aton—was born.

During the 8th year of his reign, Akhenaton moved to the new city. Ankhesenpaaten—she lives for Aton—was born.

In the 11th year, Neferneferuaten was born. The new religion began to develop. Akhenaton wrote the Hymn to Aton around this time.

Nefertiti's influence was now noticeable.

Ai-Ra was named High Priest of Aton.

During the 13th and 15th years, two new daughters were born.

Shortly before her death, Tiye, Akhenaton's mother, visited the Temple in the City of the Horizon of Aton. She was buried in Thebes.

Moderation disappeared after her death. The name of Amon was systematically erased from even the smallest objects. Of the millions of known inscriptions, few were saved.

Even on his own tomb, Amenophis III's name was replaced by "Neb-Maat-Ra". One strange detail is worth noting: Akhenaton named his fifth daughter Neferneferure, and his sixth daughter, Setepenre. He used "Re" instead of Aten, as in the names of his first four daughters. He wanted a male child, but after six "disappointments", he had yet a seventh one. He had no other descendants, at least none that survived early infancy.

He married his first daughter to Smenkhkare, an Egyptian nobleman. The King of Babylon asked for a daughter for one of his sons, and Akhenaton gave him his fourth one. The third daughter married Tutankhaten, who later became Pharaoh Tutankhamen. Akhenaton's second daughter was of delicate health and died young, like her sister Meketaten.

Since Akhenaton's health was poor, he had his tomb quickly built.

As he had no successor, the prospects for his religion were somber.

External matters aggravated Akhenaton's situation, such as the quarrel between Babylon and the Hittites, Aziru's ventures, etc. He developed a strange passiveness, leaving the King of Byblos, Rib-Hadda, who had been faithful to him, without aid.

The Pharaohs were accustomed to celebrating their jubilee in the 30th year of their reign. Akhenaton celebrated his jubilee when he was 30 years old. It was as if he wished to date his reign back to the time of his birth.

At 30, he was already thin and wasted. He decided that all the deities, not only Amon, should have their names erased from all inscriptions, so that only Aton would remain. This measure was not strictly applied. The names of Hathor, Ptah, etc., and even the plural "Gods", were removed. When he had limited himself to erasing Amon, he had only one priesthood against him; now he had all of them.

It appears that the head of the military, Horemheb, disagreed with Akhenaton's pacifist policy. He secretly planned campaigns which he would later carry out. This was possibly done in collusion with the High Priest of Aton, Meri-Ra.

Without descendants, and in the face of great opposition, even among his officials, Akhenaton confided his trust in Smenkhkare, whom he had married with great pomp to his eldest daughter when she was 12 years old.

Akhenaton made his son-in-law co-regent. When Smenkhkare eventually succeeded Akhenaton, he adopted the epithet "Beloved of Akhenaton".

Having an associate to the throne turned out to be an insufficient measure. Syria was almost lost, and the massive expenditures for the building of the Horizon of Aton had drained the immense Egyptian treasury.

Undoubtedly, Akhenaton understood that the religion of Aton would not survive his death, as it indeed came to pass.

All we know is that with his demise, his empire died. The examination of his mummy suggested a seizure. He is believed to have suffered from epilepsy. He was about 30 years old at the time. He is thought to have been in the 18th year of his rule, but an inscription has been found that mentions the 19th year.

Nothing else is known of Nefertiti. She is thought to have outlived her husband by a year. Her son-in-law and successor, Tutankhaton, was persuaded to return to Thebes, and the City of Horizon was completely abandoned. There was a period of coexistence between the two cults of Aton and Amon, but through the influence of Horemheb, chief of the military, Amon triumphed.

Forty years after Akhenaton's death, the priesthood of Amon totally restored their influence. Akhenaton's name was erased, and he was referred to as "that criminal". The inscriptions "Amenophis IV" were not touched.

The Temple of Aton in Karnak was demolished. Akhenaton was buried in Tiye's tomb. This tomb was opened, and Akhenaton's body was removed. His name was cut from all of the burial wrappings. All inscriptions were erased. Afterward, he was returned to the coffin.

This struggle between Amon and Aton was called the struggle of the Two Suns.

Curiously enough, the seed left by the followers of Aton was crystallized in Osiris, who incarnated and died among human beings for the salvation of the world.

The Temple of Initiation

4th Teaching

The books of the Eternal Mother were studied in the Temple of Initiation. The power and wisdom of the Priests of Amon reached their heights, and polytheism achieved its pinnacle of brilliance within the Esoteric Schools of Amon.

The Temple of Amon that has passed down into memory was probably located near the Nile, several hundred kilometers from Thebes. It was an immense, square, white marble structure. The influence of its priests was felt throughout the world, even though they never physically left its precincts.

Its male and female residents lived in compounds which were completely separated by high, thick walls. Men, as well as women, were completely removed from the world. They were truly dead to the exterior. For many years, they lived in residences which had no windows facing towards the outside.

Admission to the Temple was based more on selection than on the candidate's vocation. Some individuals were even psychically drawn to the Temple. The candidate entered at the age of twelve.

This step was so solemn--since it truly meant death to an ordinary life--that the candidates' relatives accompanied them as if in a funeral procession. They brought them to an exterior precinct of the Temple where there was only an empty coffin into which the candidates were placed.

These candidates were often of royal blood. This was important because the Pharaohs were initiated by the priests in times of splendor. These priests were also "royal" by virtue of their knowledge, power, and blood.

There were seven compounds.

The casket containing the candidate was transported to the first compound.

Postulants had to pass through seven stages, each of varying length, to reach the heights of their career. Very few reached the summit.

The Teachings dealt with physical as well as intellectual aspects—never one without the other.

Each stage was completed in turn within one of the walled compounds mentioned above.

The first stage—which could be called the stage of "physical renovation and forgetfulness"—was under the care of highly experienced priests.

In this stage, neophytes were stripped of everything they brought from the world. Of course, this included their clothes and all personal objects. They were subjected to vision and writing tests. Their nails were torn out to liberate them from animal instincts.

Like novices in the Christian orders, they did not study. On the contrary, they were encouraged to forget all that they knew. This was achieved through special potions which not only promoted elimination of the body's impurities, but also made them forget everything they had learned.

These potions produced high fevers and great weight-loss. This stage could last from one week to several years, depending on the candidate's constitution.

When candidates had been purified, and had forgotten everything they knew—reading, writing, etc., and even their name, their family, and all the events that had occurred up to that point—they were put to sleep again and moved to the second compound.

The second stage could be described as the “development of intelligence”.

Bear in mind that the chosen adolescents entered this area purified, and without any notion of their previous life.

One cannot imagine a more beautiful place. Everything that the science and might of a rich empire could provide was gathered there. Palaces were constructed of the incomparable white, blue and green marbles of ancient Egypt. These marbles were so marvelous that the priests could use them to study the reflection of the sun's light. The most beautiful paintings, sculptures and works of art were found in these palaces. The gardens were indescribable, and the plants so well cared-for that, in certain cases, a single plant had its own exclusive caregiver. They took advantage of the spring fluctuations of the Nile for raising crops.

In this stage, the sciences and arts were studied, but not religion. Intelligence was developed, as well as mental flexibility.

They prevented any possible confusion between intelligence and spirituality: a spiritual being may well lack mental flexibility, and conversely, an intellectual may lack spirituality.

In this stage, they were taught how to discern. After a time, which naturally varied, the students possessed very sure judgment in the scientific as well as the aesthetic order.

When the moment arrived for passing to the third stage—which could be classified as “remembrance and choice”, the student was hypnotized and moved to the next compound.

Of course, not all students were able to take this step, as it was much too difficult for many of them.

Since a neophyte never left the Temple after having entered it, those who did not advance beyond this stage became what might be called “servant-priests”. Among them were the embalmers. Those who did not transcend the first stage worked with the provisions and other aspects of the material administration of the Temple.

In the third stage, they could read the Books of the Divine Mother. They studied what could be called “psychology”. They were now able to remember their previous life.

However, seventy percent failed in this compound.

The study of the Teachings led many to the knowledge that if the only real thing is the One, then all “the rest” was worth nothing. Why eat, sleep or do anything which was not That?

The majority allowed themselves to die.

Very few failed after the fourth stage. They dedicated themselves to the study of magic. In doing so, they could offer others the opportunity of advancing. They acquired psychic powers: clairvoyance, astral travel, etc.

Only after reaching the fifth stage did they dedicate themselves to Contemplation.

In the sixth stage, they studied Theology. They recognized that any union attained is momentary because the personality is so tied to what surrounds it.

When the priests imposed a punishment, no matter how severe, they proceeded fearlessly. They believed that if the punished ones were to blame, they would need to atone for their fault through Karma. Hence punishment only anticipated Karma.

The Temple is now hidden, buried beneath the sands. Muslims are in charge of making it inaccessible.

One of the powers which the priests of Amon possessed was the ability to die by ecstasy.

They had acquired such knowledge of the beyond that they feared nothing. This gave rise to abuses, making strict regulations necessary.

For this death, seven priests were required to take an oath. They agreed that, when they reached this extreme point, they would invoke death together. Even if only one had decided, the remaining six also had to die. This pact could exist for life or be in effect for a determined amount of time.

Having reached that extreme point, the seven who had taken the oath retired to a solitary place. They generally fasted for 40 days, but there were cases when they fasted for 27 or 18 days. The object of that practice was to weaken the physical body in order to dispose of it with greater ease. Meanwhile, they concentrated upon the highest conceivable Entity.

As soon as this fast was over, they concentrated on their centers, beginning with the inferior ones. They concentrated on each part of a center, considering its uselessness. These centers, lacking a reason for existing, ceased to function.

They proceeded this way with each center, one after another. When they reached the highest, they found that, despite everything, they were still strongly tied to life. Therefore, they proceeded to the retrospective examination, after which they were able to take the great step.

Amon in the Hellenic Schools

5th Teaching

The esoteric school which, to give it a name, could be called polytheistic, found its highest expression in Egypt. Eventually it declined and its temples were completely buried beneath the sands.

Muslims had the duty of preventing any search for these temples. Only recently, less than a century and a half ago, the temples and tombs began to be uncovered, and their completely exoteric inscriptions deciphered. The esoteric teachings were destroyed, mainly when the Library of Alexandria disappeared.

However, the immense knowledge of this school has not completely disappeared from the face of the earth. It has flourished up to this day under various forms and in different places, almost always in contrast to some form of monotheism.

What remains of all this has been bequeathed to humanity, first and foremost, through the Hellenic Schools.

When the priests of Amon were forced into exile, they had to take refuge in Greece. At that time, Greece was inhabited by very primitive beings who were primarily concerned with satisfying their fundamental needs.

The priests of Amon were there for a short time, but it was long enough to leave a seed.

When the priests of Amon (polytheists) returned to Egypt, the priests of Aton (monotheists) were, in turn, exiled from Egypt. And they too took refuge in Greece.

Thus, in Greece, it is possible to study the influence of both schools over the centuries.

The two great conceptions had very important philosophical derivations. The doctrine of grace derived from polytheism (Amon), and that of free will from monotheism (Aton).

If we assume that everything is an illusion, nothing more than the reflection and emanation of Unmanifested Divinity, then it is clear that anything—a human being, the mind, the soul—is no more than a reflection, absolutely dependent on that which does not manifest itself. Souls can do nothing to change their destinies, whether holy or criminal, wise or foolish. Taken to the extreme, this conception leads to fatalism: the being is not free except as God, in its totality.

However, those who believe in free will maintain that if human beings are divine, if they have some particle of divinity, they will necessarily be able to determine themselves to a certain degree.

The characteristics of the Greek Initiatic Schools were very different from the Egyptian ones. From here on, this teaching will deal exclusively with the schools which followed the currents of Amon, leaving the monotheistic tendency to one side.

To begin with, there are evident differences, in both ways and means, between the Greeks and the Egyptians.

The Egyptian priest studied all of science and all aspects of wisdom. The Greeks, on the other hand, thought that one lifetime was not enough to cover them all completely.

The Egyptian Temple was one, and immense. On the other hand, although the Greek Temple was the center of religious, philosophical, and pedagogical culture, each Temple was dedicated to a single branch.

This was primarily due to the physical constitution of these individuals. The Egyptians were surprisingly robust, resilient, and flexible, conditions which were notably enhanced by drugs and surgery. Their sexual appetite was moderate, especially among the priests. Although the Greeks were beautiful, they were not very resilient; few of them could have endured the Egyptian plan.

The kingdom of Egypt was highly united under its Pharaoh. Greece was composed of countless kingdoms and cities. Everything was divided within it.

The first problem the Greeks confronted was sex. Consequently, in many temples the primary focus of study for celibates was transmutation. These teachings failed because the Greek, being lustful, thought along these lines: "If we elevate all natural acts, offering them to the Divinity, we make them divine too."

Up to a certain point, this worked. But it wasn't long before abuses were committed, with no other pretext than attempting to make anti-natural acts divine.

Many of these beings developed their intelligence remarkably, and have repeatedly returned to the physical world. However, many intelligent and capable beings have failed because they have become attached to some vice (gambling, drink, sex), and they will not be able to excel until they overcome it.

Additionally, they studied magic and psychic powers.

It is important to note that the Greeks had very different needs than the Egyptians in what is referred to as the love of form. For the Greek, the sexual act had a double meaning, and very few passed beyond the first stage.

There is not much information concerning the second stage.

Those who reached the third, philosophical stage, were silent.

Even so, many works of the Greek philosophers have survived to the present. Through Plato and his followers, the current of Amon and grace is mirrored; through Aristotle and his followers, that of Aton and free will.

Plato's influence declined over the centuries, but it was revived with Iamlichus and Plotinus. The doctrine of grace greatly influenced the Christian Church, especially through Saint Augustine. Naturally, this Church would be monotheistic. Nevertheless, the Aristotelian doctrine was remarkably affirmed within the Church in the 18th century by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Even after Cleopatra's death, some religious treasures from the glory of the Temple of Amon remained. Instead of falling into the hands of the Roman conquerors, they were carried in great secrecy to an almost inaccessible place in the middle of the African desert, surrounded by high mountains. They were taken there by faithful disciples whose descendants guard them to this day. These disciples have always successfully defended their treasure; not even the Muslims could discover it.

The memory of Amon was not erased in the East. Julia Domna, daughter of a priest of the Fire of Emesa, Syria, married the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, and in her court she surrounded herself with a select group of beings whose works are remembered even today.

It was not until the Renaissance that Plato was studied once again. Florentine scholars of the 15th century excelled in this regard.

The Esoteric Schools of knowledge and of Love continually fight with each other, and continually merge with and search for each other. And it is through these struggles that these two forces will reunite to form a single expression of the divinity once the age of Pisces is over.

King Arthur, the Holy Grail, and the Round Table and its Knights

6th Teaching

During the great flowering of Christianity, the legacy of the Esoteric Schools was passed on first to the Initiate Knights, and then to the Military Orders.

Hellenic and Roman esotericism, which successfully nourished the beginnings of Christianity through Neo-Platonism, was completely lost.

When Justinian vetoed all philosophical schools in the year 500, the esoteric masters moved to Persia in order to prepare the ground for the rise of an abundance of esoteric schools within the Islamic religion.

However, during the time of the first Crusades, the Christian knights would again be in contact with the Muslim Esoteric Schools.

The Norman Knights—men of great religious fervor, who united the teachings of their Druidic, Gaelic and Celtic-Iberian ancestors with a fervent Christianity—were foremost in assimilating these esoteric teachings. By 800 AD, they had already produced a flourishing of esoteric Christian knighthood.

The legends of the Knight Errant, the Holy Grail, and King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, date from those times.

These esoteric groups were not formally established as Christian. However, following their own way of life, they were Christian in essence. They later formed Military Orders and Esoteric Schools.

When an Initiate Knight entered the brotherhood, he took a solemn oath to be faithful to it until death, to oppose all injustices, and to always defend the poor, the helpless, and the abandoned.

The first ceremony which unfolded before the neophyte's eyes was the taking of the oath.

A promise is a Divine gift, and only the Gods can make promises to humans. It is difficult for a human being to make a promise, since human nature constantly breaks the strongest wills. That is why it was said: "Thou shall not swear." However, as an oath is divine, when human beings agree to take an oath, they implicitly acquire the obligation of transforming their human nature into a divine one.

Since Divine Wisdom cannot be the food of the common person, secrecy was indispensable, lest the Divine Veil be lifted by inexperienced hands.

The Bible says, "Whoever sees the face of God will die," because a being must reach a certain level of spiritual unfolding to be able to study Eternal Wisdom. That level is attained little by little, led by the hand of the Initiates. Moreover, the neophytes would only look at

their companions' faces for the first time in this oath-taking ceremony. The Vision of the Face is a symbol of that occult wisdom revealed only to a few.

With this oath, the new adepts entered the Spiritual, Mental and Psychic Great Current generated by the Esoteric Order. It would be harmful to be violently expelled from the Great Current in which they had voluntarily placed themselves.

In order to reach this first step of the Ceremonial, the neophyte had to force the door of the Sanctuary open, for without effort nothing can be attained.

The Assistant brought wine in a horn made from a deer antler. This horn was a symbol of the inferior nature; the wine, of the creative force in its inferior aspect.

After having tasted the juice of the grape, Noah entered into a deep sleep, and his sons mocked him. A human being must penetrate the depths of the inferior nature and the subconscious in order to know the forces which move and direct everything.

The Initiates had the neophyte extend his/her right arm out over the horn, stretching out their own in turn. With a stroke of the sword, the two arms were incised, and drops of blood mixed with the wine.

Blood is of inestimable value. Every physical substance pours into it. The whole life force, as well as all its toxins, is found in blood. And it is the only substance which is in direct contact with the astral ether. As a result, as soon as the vital force no longer animates the blood, it coagulates and, so to speak, materializes. Blood is thus a symbol of the superior nature which sacrifices itself by mixing with the inferior nature, thereby redeeming it and raising it up to its liberation. This is what is symbolized by the redemption carried out by Christ, who sheds his blood on the Cross. This act is repeated every day in the Chalice of the Holy Mass.

But it is the will, impelled by love, which can carry out this redemption—the strong will of the sword's cold steel that has made the incision.

Afterward, the Initiate and the neophyte alternately took sips of the precious liquor. This fusion of inferior and superior parts is indispensable for humanity to be able to return to its pristine spiritual glory. Thus, the mystery of the Sacred Eucharist, of the close union and inseparability of Spirit and Matter, is explained once again.

With the taking of their oaths, the neophytes not only bound themselves to the Order; the Order simultaneously bound itself to them. Love and union harmonized with values and pairs of opposites, and the effort of the one would be rewarded by the gift of the other.

Once the oath was completed, the gatekeeper stepped forward and broke the horn.

When the Initiate Knight invested the members of the Order with the tunic, he touched their shoulder with the sword--the right shoulder of the men and the left shoulder of the women--

thus symbolizing transmutation through purification. He also gave each of them a rose. The open flower represents the vortices of the astral forces in an active and developed state.

The members' tunics were white, orange or black. The white tunics were for Pages and Maidens who, since they had to step on the mud of the world, needed to accentuate the purity and innocence of their souls. Squires and Damsels had orange tunics, symbolizing the pride and glory of the Order. Knights and Dames wore black tunics, meaning that they had died to the world and lived only in the Eternal.

The masculine tunics reached the knees and were worn over armor, since the spiritual should not interfere with action. Women's tunics reached the floor, indicating decorum and discretion.

All cloaks were white with a completely circular border, for the circle was a sign of the Manifested God.

The cowl was also circular and indicated Spiritual Power. In the early years of the Christian Church, when it was purely spiritual, the Popes used a white cowl. But when they acquired material power, they changed it for a gold crown. In antiquity the crown pertained to kings, as a sign of visible and material power, and the cowl to the High Priests, as a sign of invisible and spiritual power. There was a red cross on the left side of the cloak at the level of the heart, signifying that the adept had dominated the inferior elements.

After the neophyte had pronounced the oath, those attending the ceremony raised the cowls which covered their faces and revealed themselves to the new member of the Order.

In addition to the cowl, Pages and Maidens wore a circular cap the color of their tunic as a sign of their submission.

Squires and Damsels wore a helmet with a gold butterfly breaking free of its chrysalis in the center. This stood for the soul's aspiration for the knowledge of all things.

The Knights and Dames also wore a helmet in the middle of which was the head of a gold serpent sticking out its forked tongue, for the raised serpent is a symbol of Supreme Wisdom. A cross was mounted above the serpent.

While the vestments were a sign of the adepts' personal and intrinsic powers, the attributes showed their active powers. Adepts had four fundamental attributes; ring, sword, chain, and seal. These corresponded to the human beings' four basic powers which are stored in these parts of the physical body: the solar plexus, the splenic plexus, the laryngeal plexus and the pineal gland.

In addition, they used brown and white horses to travel. In the evolution of inferior beings,

the horse has reached the highest degree of unfolding and is the link uniting the animal and the human kingdoms. It represents the instinctive nature, dominated and subdued by human will. The inferior nature does not have to be destroyed, but directed and guided.

In the Order, the brown horse represented instinct mastered, but still sensitive to inferior attractions which continually drag it to the world. The Squire had dominated his passions, but he repeatedly returned among human beings in order to help them. The white horse represented instinct completely mastered. The Knight only employed it for his personal use, or for works which appeared semi-divine to humanity's eyes.

It is relevant to mention the apparition of James the Apostle on the battlefield. His purpose was to defend the hosts of Ramiro, and lead them to victory over the Moors. The warrior who appeared in the battle wore all of the attributes of the Knights of the Secret and Initiatic Orders of the time: he was riding a white horse, and had resplendent armor, a flaming sword, a white cloak, and a standard with a red cross emblazoned on it.

The Great Being, whom the Spanish took for a saint, was none other than an Initiate Knight who appeared on his horse, well-equipped to lead them to victory as if he were a demigod.

The ring, the sword, the chain and the seal corresponded to the four major suits of the Tarot. The seal corresponded to wands, the chain to cups, the sword to swords, and the ring to pentacles.

The ring corresponded to the solar plexus and indicated the power of mastery—over oneself, the elements, the natural forces and all other human beings who had not reached the same level of spiritual advancement. This is signified by the diamond and the gold—images of the solar force and its rays, which cover the whole planet.

The sword corresponded to the splenic plexus and indicated the power of strength, and the victory over fear. The final stroke that liberated beings was the knowledge of their own strength, which acts like cold and cutting steel on all that surrounds it.

When the Psalmist sings of the King's beauties in Psalm 44, he does not forget to counsel the King to gird his sword to his left thigh, as if to explain that strength resides in the splenic plexus.

The circular chain, which bore the name of that member of the Order, expressed the power of vibration, of the word, of rhythm. It corresponds to the laryngeal plexus which, when well-developed, allowed the student to perceive astral voices and sounds.

The seal, completely gold with the sign of Ankh imprinted on it, was the image of the creative power, similar to fire. It is the root point of the mind, the boundary between the Spirit and manifest substance.

These attributes did not pertain to all members of the Order—the seal belonged only to the Grand Master. Only the Initiate possessed the creative power, the power of transmutation.

The being arrived at Initiation alone, without any exterior help, without any companion, like an image of God reflecting upon itself.

The ring pertained to the Knights and Dames. The strong magnetism with which it was charged indicated that these men and women had solved the inner problem of diversity. They knew that a single force ruled over human and universal destinies, and they voluntarily directed that force toward the attainment of their aspiration.

Squires and Damsels also carried the sword. One could pass from the psychic world to the soul world solely by force. Only the brave could cross the circle of fear and take possession of the force which sleeps dormant in each individual's sacral plexus.

All the members of the order wore the chain, which symbolized the psychic powers within the reach of all who were well-trained and exercised.

The chain is related to cups, an image of the female matrix (womb) and the material aspect of all things. The seal is related to wands, an image of the male lingam and of the creative and spiritual aspect of things. The sword is an image of the union between Spirit and Matter, of the offspring of the wand and the cup. The ring—pentacles—symbolized mastery over the mind and all manifested things.

Ancient Initiation Ceremonies of Knights

7th Teaching

In addition to the movement of the sun through the twelve houses of the zodiac, the ancient Initiates saw in a year the path of the soul in search of perfection, from birth to death. That is why they placed such importance on the annual festivities that symbolized the different steps and aspects of material and spiritual life.

Julius Caesar arbitrarily removed some hours from each year. He summed those hours up and combined them into one day every four years—Leap Year. But esoteric students always protested against this decision which subtracted value from the true year, the Mystical Year.

A true year equals a Hindu *daiva* year: 365 days, 5 hours, 30 minutes, 31 seconds. Alfonso X—the Wise—King of Castile, assigned the year 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and 16 seconds.

The date we currently assign as the beginning of the year is not the one used by the ancients either. The true year began on the spring equinox.

The Mystical Year is divided into four parts, just as the spiritual life of the Initiate Knights was divided into four stages.

The first stage, which begins on the spring equinox, is welcomed by the festivity of the reopening of the Book of the Mother. It marks a return to things that were left in order to sublimate them.

Nature opens the book of manifestation and thus shows her wisdom. She causes all the flowers—precursors of fruit—to spring forth from the womb of the earth.

The mystical ritual is the image of the continuous changing of all things; the descent of spirit into matter, the sacrifice of that which has more on behalf of that which has less, thus distributing its wealth.

The symbology says that one day, when the disciple is strong, he will return to kill his enemy. That is why this first part of the Mystical Year is also a symbol of reincarnation, as well as of the law of consequences which, through its effects, creates a return to the root of the cause.

Beings who have reached the highest level of spiritual evolution periodically feel impelled to return among humans in order to share values with them. They offer them love; they make themselves smaller in order to make humans bigger.

When all the Knights were gathered together, they received the message that the Masters had transmitted to the Grand Master.

Much will be asked of those to whom much has been given.

Standing with their unsheathed swords wrapped in their white mantles, they received the order. The one who had been designated to fulfill some Great Work in the world would embrace his

companions and give them the kiss of peace. He received the blessing of the Grand Master and departed on his white horse to secretly fulfill his mission. The others lit a great bonfire upon the mountain, so that the fire could guide the Knight redeemer during his mission in the darkness of the world. The other Knights returned to their studies, their exercises, their concentrations, awaiting their own hour.

The sword wrapped in the mantle represents the Divine Mother, the Supreme Will, enveloped in the Veil of Ahehia, the manifest wisdom that the Knight and Dame must make an effort to discover. In order to reach supreme realization, sacrifice is indispensable—the descent into the inferior worlds and passing through them without becoming stained.

The march represents the wheel of lives and deaths. The bonfire on the mountain represents the superior part of the human, the highest ideal, the spiritual vocation which always accompanies him. Christians imitate this beautiful Initiatic Ceremony in the bonfires of Saint John, and with the feast of the Annunciation of Archangel Gabriel to Mary.

After their knightly investiture, the ancient medieval Knights also went wandering into the world in search of adventure, always eager to find the woman of their dreams or the cup of the Holy Grail.

Wagner offers some marvelous images: Lohengrin is the Initiate Knight who abandons the castle of the Knights of Montsalvat in order to defend the falsely accused maiden.

Even today, Tables open their courses on this date. The time of festivity and happiness has passed, and the time of discipline, work and sacrifice has returned. The book of the teachings, which was closed, is reopened. Each one sacrifices the best part of their internal essence to benefit the others. This is also the customary date for establishing new Tables, always with the sacrifice of the sponsoring Table.

The second part of the year begins with the summer solstice. The fruits are ripe and the wheat is ready to be turned into bread. The Knights and Dames prepare their banquet in order to consummate the Mystical Wedding of Union between matter and spirit. This ceremony is the image of the alliance of the spirit with the soul, the two concordant principles which finally meet each other and unite.

In the Southern hemisphere this is solemnly carried out on the full moon of May. It is repeated more simply throughout the year.

On the night of the full moon, all the members of the Table gather as one. They hold the banquet at night because night is the mother of mysteries, intimacies and weddings. It is held on the full moon because the full moon signifies that even though the past is dead, it touches the present in order to perpetuate itself in the future. Once souls have united with the same ideal, even though dead, they will find each other again and be reunited.

The banquet is carried out in a square room with the table arranged in the form of a horseshoe. The Grand Master sits at the center and the rest of the Knights sit in order at his right, and the Dames in order to his left.

The table should be set in the following way: a white cord is placed on it in a straight line and all the plates are placed upon it. Another cord, this one orange, is laid out and the glasses are placed upon it; parallel to this is a black cord where the bottles are placed, and finally, another parallel white cord where the platters are placed.

In antiquity, the plates were made of silver. Perhaps the use of metals like silver and gold was due to the fact that they ward off animal magnetism. Each plate was for personal use only.

In ancient times, the drinking cup was made of a special wood—a very subtle vegetable fiber. This is the origin of those marvelous legends related to the chalice of the Lord and the Holy Grail.

It has already been explained that wine is an image of the inferior nature. The Initiate drinks the juice of the grape, and knows how to transmute it, turning inferior values into superior ones.

Once the meal was finished, they made a solemn toast. It is as if the joyful and festive part of each soul wished to unite itself in a single expression of beauty in order to endure as a guiding entity.

After the toast of the Grand Master, the cup he drank from was broken.

The table is always a sign of pact and alliance. The altar of every religion is the table of the Gods. God made a pact with Jacob, and an altar or mystical table was raised in remembrance of this pact.

Christ instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist as the paschal banquet. The early Christians used to make a brotherly communal meal.

In the family, the table unites all its members around it at mealtime. It is the hour of intimacy in which the parents reunite with all the children and contemplate with satisfaction the whole family gathered. It is the hour of the preservation of the familial alliance.

On the full moon, when the banquet is held, the sun—image of the spiritual sun—is at its nadir. This is also when it has descended from its heights and sunk into the inferno seeking its lost bride, just as Orpheus descended into hell to seek his wife Eurydice, and to make a new alliance, a new pact, a new marriage with her.

It is desirable that the members of the Order accompany all these ceremonies with a spirit of fervor and understanding; otherwise, they would be in vain. May all members endeavor to make an alliance with their companions, a union of souls, a union of sentiments and ideals, so that this union may be the future soul of the victory of the Spiritual Ideal.

On the autumn equinox, as the earth had given its fruit, the completed work was celebrated. It was called the feast of the King, because the Knights celebrated their Leader and the Initiate Knight.

On the winter solstice, the Knights carried out the festivity of Renunciation. The most advanced abandoned the community and ascended the Mountain to the castle of the Perfect. This ceremony occurs in the fourth part of the year, and it is the last ceremony visible on the physical plane. Perhaps this is why it is the most rhythmic and poetic ceremony of them all.

In all sectors of life, in all groups, there are always those who excel; those who reach a state of inner liberation. Even though they still have a physical body, these learned souls understand that they have nothing left to do among humans. An irresistible desire for solitude and withdrawal impels them to seek out a recollected life, one dedicated to contemplation.

It is a well-known belief that these extraordinary beings exist in India. They live in solitary places, hidden in high mountains. The Theosophical Society founded its whole Work on the Messages of these Himalayan Masters.

In the ancient Orders, this mystical departure with no return was symbolized by a splendid ceremony. When, due to his elevated state of perfection, a Knight felt impelled to leave all exterior things, the Grand Master gathered all the Knights, and together they sang the Hymn of Liberation. Two veiled Dames--symbols of the hidden worlds the chosen one was to conquer--immediately entered the room. They carried a blue cloth in their hands. They removed the Knight's white mantle and lined it in blue. Afterwards the Knight cut the right end of his mantle with his sword, and divided it into seven parts. He gave each of the seven remaining Knights one of these pieces as a remembrance of him.

This is the image of the Eternal Knights and Dames, the Enduring Knight and Dames. Whether they live or die, no one knows. They have reached the point of mastering their inferior and superior principles, disposing of them as they will.

But where do these chosen beings live? In what part of the world?

These secret places where Initiatic Orders had, or have, their official seat are not haphazard destinations. They correspond to the seven plexuses of energy of the planet. There are seven non-maritime sites where the natural magnetism is more intense than in other places. Of course, they are always mountainous places. There are innumerable mountains reputed to be sacred.

One of earth's primary magnetic places is in Tibet, especially in the Shambhala region, which is the principal seat of the Yellow Lamas. Montserrat in Catalonia is the most magnetic place in Europe. Even today, the Rosicrucian Brothers have their astral reunions there. Various magnetic places exist in the Americas. One can be found in the desolate mountains of the province of San Luis, and another on Lake Hueche Lauquen. Lohengrin describes one of these places calling it Montsalvat, and in order to make it more inaccessible, he describes it as being surrounded by water, and calls it "unknown place".

But, did these initiatic castles really exist in antiquity? Yes, they really did. And all the medieval castles were copied from those founded by Initiate Knights.

You can find a certain type of these castles, or ruins, in Catalonia, in the south of Galicia, in Flanders, Normandy and Scotland. There are marvelous examples of them in the north of Germany, but they were built at a later date.

Of course, the Ancient Orders had to have their secluded places and their castles in which the Initiate Knights enclosed themselves.

Nothing will be mentioned about Mount Kaor because only the ruins of the early Temple remain there. But one can describe how these retreats must have been. At the great height of a thousand meters, in an unknown and mostly uninhabited region, a building completely surrounded by walls and water was constructed. No member of the Order knew of this place, other than those who lived there, and the Grand Masters. No woman, nor anyone outside of the Order, could enter that place. White and black swans were nurtured in the moat that surrounded the castle, as a symbol of Eternity, manifested and unmanifested. These solitary Knights, these pure guardians of Eternal Wisdom, lived there with such purity and serenity that only in hours of interior ecstasy and perfect prayer can one glimpse that state.

Even if those places have disappeared, there is still an inaccessible and solitary place for Knights and Dames to hide away and live their intimate lives: the impregnable castle of the Inner Sanctuary.

The four seasons of the year also symbolize the four great epochs that the Aryan race has passed through since its birth.

The first part of the race dates from its birth from the Semitic-Atlantean race, 850,000 years ago, until the definitive establishment of the Aryan race 118,769 years ago (based on the year 1941).

The second stage corresponds to the time between the establishment of the Aryan race until the 1500-Year War, 25,868 years ago (based on the year 1941).

The third stage dates from the 1500-Year War until the submergence of Poseidonis, the last Atlantean relic, 11,000 years ago.

The fourth epoch dates from the sinking of this island until the present day.

These four stages are also a reminder of the four stages the Esoteric Orders passed through.

The first one was the splendid and golden age of the Initiate Masters. It is dated from the time of the Temple of Kaor, some 25,868 years ago, until the submersion of Poseidonis, 11,000 years ago.

The second one represents the stage of kingly power and dominion—the age of silver—which lasted from the submergence of Poseidonis until the reign of Amenophis IV, some 3,311 years ago (based on the year 1941).

The third was the era of esoteric priesthood. It was the stage in which the Esoteric Schools had already completed their trove of wisdom. It lasted from Amenophis IV until the founding of the Teutonic Order by Hermann von Salza c. 1197.

The fourth corresponds to the Christian and chivalric era of action and sacrifice, and it dates from the foundation of the Teutonic Order until the present day.

These stages are also symbolized in human life, which has four principal periods: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age.

Also, the Mystical Year was meant to stimulate everyone to give true meaning to the years, months, days and hours. Foolish people allow them to slip by and, without noticing, suddenly find themselves with white hair and empty hands.

Wise beings measure their time. They know that, with each passing hour, they have one less opportunity for their spiritual advancement. As the year passes, so do life's possibilities, the good occasions, the energy, the mental clarity of youth, as well as all the gifts within their reach for attaining perfection.

Thus, within the Mystical Year, the Initiation ceremonies of the Knights have kept an excellent rhythm, measure and stability within time. And, in the words that ancients inscribed on the luminous spheres of their clocks, time is the material of which life is made.

The Guardians of Eternity

8th Teaching

The physical Order is a reflection of the astral Order.

There are souls in the astral world who renounce the peace and happiness of the higher planes in order to continue working for the good of humanity, and in particular, to help their companions in the Order who struggle for the same objective and ideal: their inner transformation and the sanctification of all souls.

These invisible Guardians can be souls who have not incarnated upon the earth for a long time or disincarnated Companions who have joined this select nucleus.

A beautiful legend tells us that the mission of the first member of the Order who dies is to remain at the Threshold of Eternity waiting to show other companions the way.

This vigilant Guardian dwells between the astral world and the cold, dark threshold, clairvoyantly attentive to the approach of the wanderer. Seeing that death surrounds an agonizing companion with its dense veils, the Guardian summons the whole company and asks them to materialize ethereally in the presence of the dying companion. Then, the Guardian asks the holy company to hold the companion's hand and guide this soul across the threshold.

When the soul sees a friend, she is consoled and distracted. With the sorrowful anguish of the dimensional change alleviated, she can move to the next plane with greater ease.

There are places located on different parts of the planet where members of the astral Tables meet mystically with mortal members who can travel in their astral bodies. Whether due to the extraordinary magnetism of these places or to the magnetism accumulated in Temples existing there for centuries, they are most suitable for these solemn endeavors.

One of these places lies beyond the Gobi Desert, on the highest mountains of Pamir. Some believe that Mount Kaor rose there and that the astral members hold their mystic assemblies in that place, imbuing the air with their sacred chants and sublime thoughts.

These astral assemblies are also held on a square black promontory on a high mesa in Tibet. In Europe, they are held on Montserrat Mountain and in the high mountains of Scotland; in Africa, in the Cape of Good Hope.

There are also several magnetic points in the Americas. The principal one in the north is in the Grand Canyon. There is another one on a lofty mountain in South America. This extinct volcano—Lanin—is reflected in the calm waters of the Hueche-Lauquen lake.

Once there was a great magnetic center in the mountains of San Luis, Argentina. Some even believe that a Sacred Temple existed there. But this center has shifted almost completely toward the South.

The atmosphere in these places seems to become so subtle that it is more etheric than physical. The heights which destroy the body no longer exist; all that remains are the heights which destroy souls who are not strong or brave enough to face the trials they encounter before arriving at the meeting place.

But the greatest concentration point has always been in the East. When the Companions on earth and those in heaven travel toward the sacred Temple, which only exists on the fourth sub-plane of the astral world, they focus and head towards Pamir, towards ancient Kaor, and from there, towards Eternity.

On those journeys, the final visions they perceive of the earth are the high mesas with inaccessible peaks and virgin snows, unknown to mortals. With her feet planted upon the mystical rope ladder, the last aura the soul sees as she looks back at the place she is leaving is the yellow light of the East, of India and Tibet.

The vibrations change these Companions' mantras into currents of life, into the eternal language that flows from one end of the new world to the other. Even here, the Guardians who have sacrificed everything for the divine remain vigilant. They extend their arms to help their astral Companions—those coming from Earth and the physical body—to cross the flame of Hes.

Resplendent in their silvery auras of sacrifice, these Guardians of the Threshold, sentinels of Eternity, carry their shining goblets filled to the brim with the nectar of souls; goblets which can only be carried by those who have given up everything out of love.

The Trials of Initiation

9th Teaching

In the ancient mysteries of Eleusis, rites were carried out that corresponded to astral initiations. Egyptian priests also symbolized these realizations by making the aspirant pass through four trials. Christians copied the ancients, and repeated those ceremonies in their investitures and religious professions.

The Esoteric Orders believed that visibly repeating these Ceremonies was completely superfluous. Only a Being who is prepared could participate in them, and this would always happen in the astral worlds. Besides, many times these rites reappeared accidentally in the disciple's ordinary life.

The first Golden Ceremony refers to the four trials that candidates must pass through in order to reach the doors of the Temple. They will be consecrated Guardians of Eternity within this place.

The four trials are symbolized by the four Knights who guard the entrance to the superior planes. They are similar to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the specter of the threshold of Zanoni, and the terrible beasts that guard the entrance in the Scandinavian Edda. In a word, they are those elemental principles which maintain, impel, govern and destroy physical life: passion, doubt, fear and separativity.

Passion seems to be lulled in seekers of the Path. Like domestic animals, the instincts are driven off by the rays of the first knowledge and the first glimpses of the initial victories. The aspirant has almost forgotten them. Sometimes many years may pass without the instincts showing any signs of life. But one day, they suddenly spring forth, and this time they have turned into terrible beasts. This return of the being's passions is part of the inevitable law of consequences: the flesh is in debt to the material deposit which formed it. This is symbolized by earth, and called the trial of Earth.

Once the seekers have found their footing in the astral planes, they will pass through a great swamp. How terrible this astral swamp is! The uncertain foot sinks with each step. Horrible monsters swarm there, as if anxiously waiting to devour the Wayfarers. But if the Masters have allowed these travelers to reach this point, it is because they know that they will be able to cross safely. Disgust for matter in its astral form—free of all veils—destroys the passions one by one. Once the travelers reach the opposite shore, instinct will never again dominate them.

The second trial is the trial of air. In order to reach the Temple, these seekers must scale the invisible stairs that lead to it. Their astral bodies must become accustomed to the fourth dimension. Suddenly, terrifyingly, their bodies assume immense dimensions, and quickly they shrink as if to nothing.

Moreover, the mystical stairs appear like hanging ropes with no supports. The uncertainty is terrifying. It continually seems as if they are going to fall into the abyss. They remain suspended there until they realize that there is no void. A hurricane breaks loose while they are climbing. It is the image of the passage from one astral state to another, a higher one.

The third trial is the trial of water—the trial of fear. Before reaching the Sacred Mountain, the candidates must cross the lake which surrounds it. Swimming achieves nothing here (courage is the very effort to swim). When the imposing nature of the mountain seizes these souls, they are overwhelmed by fear. The astral body feels like it is sinking into water that does not drown, but freezes and paralyzes all perceptions instead. Masters and invisible Protectors always accompany the candidates during these trials; otherwise it would be difficult for even the most advanced to pass through them. Fear is the mortal enemy of human beings, and until it is completely vanquished, they cannot think of going very far.

The fourth trial of this first part of the Golden Ceremony is the trial of fire. Think of a moment when one has reached the threshold of achieving an ideal that one has dreamed of one's whole life. Only then can one understand that only through death will it be definitively achieved.

The Temple is surrounded by inextinguishable flames. No Knight [Dame] will pass through them uninjured; only "The Knight" ["The Dame"]. Their search for realization was useless. Realization is beyond personality. All sense of separativity must be erased if they wish to pass through that fire which destroys everything, consumes everything except the Spirit, the Unity. The second part of the Golden Ceremony represents the three mental temptations which are indispensable in order to recognize the Divine Mother, and identify with Her.

These trials are not for common human beings; they are only for great souls.

Before Jesus began his divine mission on the Earth, he had to pass through these trials and overcome them. Only adept masters dominate the passion of the flesh, the thirst for power, and the eagerness for riches.

Through incalculable trials, the being has crossed the circle of fire. Its image is now the image of all beings, and the seamless tunic which it wears is the reflection of all manifested powers.

The candidate has arrived at the hour of the Mystical wedding. The Mother Divine will lift her veil to show her Face to her longed-for friend.

Three feminine images, of dazzling beauty, and robed in red, blue and yellow, are presented to the initiate. The image of the Mother Divine, white and veiled, reveals its presence, arising and standing out amidst a horizon of fire.

"What have you come looking for, Pilgrim, through so many dangers and trials?"

"Who other than You, oh Mother Eternal?!"

"But... Who Am I?" says the Mother.

"You are the sum of life, beauty, enchantment, and the triumph of eternity!"

But the three women tempt the Pilgrim for the last time, driving doubt into the soul once again.

They say: *"You don't know who is hidden behind those white veils. Why don't you ask her to reveal her presence, and show you what she is? Look at us as we are: realization, enchantment, life, change."*

“Do not ask such great trials of me...,” says the veiled woman.

But doubt has entered the soul of the Knight [Dame], who insists that the woman reveal herself.

The Pilgrim says, *“Even though you have the most horrible forms, if you are the dream I have pursued over many lives, I will know you.”*

“So be it,” says the Mother.

This is the trial of choice.

The white veils fall; the shroud falls. And to the frightened eyes of the Knight [Dame], there appears the most horrific image that could possibly be described—an old, decrepit, body that appears to bear the weight of countless years, dried, parchment-like flesh—one glance confirms that this is nothing human.

The three women laugh, saying: *“Here you have your ‘Beloved’!”*

The Mother then says, *“Choose; them or me”*.

If the Knight [Dame] can endure the trial of choice, he or she will fall at the feet of the Mother and adore her in her form of destruction. This is enough for the nightmare to disappear, and the Mother Divine to recover her aspect of eternal youth and beauty.

A High Entity conducts this Ceremony in the Astral Table. This being, who no longer assumes a physical body on earth, has been organizing the Esoteric Orders for many generations, and periodically directs the Astral Table. Its last incarnation was as a woman, and it preserves this feminine aspect on the astral plane, representing the Universal Mother.

The Temple has filled with shadows so dense and obscure that they have become unimaginable.

The black stone of the Mother has arisen.

In the darkness, only the sleeping form of the Mother in her eternal coffin can be seen. Sighs, silent shadows and unknown footsteps fill the temple. Little by little, shapes emerge, the shadows of those who were powerful, those who dominated the earth and have come to pay homage to the Queen of all forms and all powers.

“I can grant you exact reckoning. I can give you the unlimited pride which is indispensable to triumph. I can teach you the most secure roads in order to destroy and make the human being master of the world. I am shadow, but once they called me king of kings, chieftain, master, tyrant, usurper.”

“If you wish, we will teach you our secret arts; we will make you master of all things of the world.”

“And what will I have to give in exchange?” asks the aspirant. One of them, the one who appears to be the Master of those wandering specters, answers as Satan answered Jesus: *“I will give you all this if you bow down and adore me.”*

And the aspirant answers as Christ did: *“Be gone Satan, for it is written: only the Lord your God shall you adore and only him shall you serve.”*

The aspirant will then only adore the Mother Divine, and the shadows will be dissipated. The aspirant has successfully passed the trial of thirst for dominion.

But the aspirant will still have to pass through the last mental trial: the thirst for wealth--not only material wealth, but also the wealth of knowledge.

The Mother will show the aspirant all of the gold hidden in the entrails of the earth, all the gold of intelligence and wisdom, and say: *“Take all of this; it is yours.”*

The aspirant must answer: *“You alone, do I aspire to and desire.”*

All the Astral Knights and Dames approach the aspirant to dress him [her] in armor which has engraved upon the breast, in letters of gold, the words: *“You have conquered.”*

The Sacred Assembly of Astral Knights [Dames] has gathered in a mystical circle, upon the desolate mountain of Kaor, in order to realize the third and last part of the Golden Ceremony on behalf of the newly chosen.

Behold the resplendent Knight [Dame], advancing with his [her] guards.

The breastplate no longer defends the physical body; instead, it is an armor of marvelous magnetic vibrations which encircles the astral body with dazzling splendor. All the material attributes and initiatic symbols have been transformed for Him [Her] into forces of new power and magnificence.

His [her] name is no longer written on a medal; it is found stamped in astral matter for all Eternity.

The age-old “Horse” is now the soles of his [her] own feet which can master the Universe.

The shimmering sword of Foa is at his [her] disposal.

Observe the ring on the finger: it is a fountain of astral forces that descend from heaven to earth.

The seal of power is that magnificent serpentine force which rises and falls within the astral body, reflecting all colors.

If the Songs of those expectant Knights and Dames could be repeated, they would be translated thus: *“Blest be you who has arrived at the Final Day and has been chosen as the Eternal Spouse of the Mother Divine. You were wed to Her. Expose yourself then to the trial of the Spirit.”*

There is a tremor of admiration upon the earth, which rests at the feet of this invisible gathering. In this twilight hour, the setting sun bids farewell and bows to the Astral Knights and Dames, covering the sky with a blood red.

It is the final hour; the hour of the spirit. The hour of understanding all in order to cast oneself into limitless darkness, in order to join with That which cannot be named.

The elementals of the air flee in terror, filling the red sky with lightning bolts.

The Eternal Image of the Veiled Woman arises from the ancient and dead crater. Within seconds, the Two will be permanently united. United--where, how?

The Initiate Knight [Dame] moves toward Her; the Holy Companions remain behind. A voice (if one could call it that) speaks:

“You do not know how long I have been waiting for this moment. You do not know, creature of a day, that I have been waiting for you since the beginning of the Universe. The worlds had not been made, nor had the Cosmic Plan been drawn up, when I was and you were too, but I was the light and you were the shadow. Since then, I have loved you above all things, and by loving you, I lost you; by loving you, I killed you. Have you not seen the statue of Kali dancing upon the dead corpse of her spouse with a bloody knife in her hand? That is no mere symbol: it is the truth. I killed you. The reality of the legend in Genesis is still alive in my memory. Out of love, I came to you with the temptation, and with it, I killed you. As I was the Divinity, I could not unite myself with humanity without destroying it. For you I made the Universe and the planetary chains and the millions of worlds that crown your head. And through these worlds and these heavens, I have searched for you. Meanwhile, you wandered on a trail of illusion seeking me. For your love, I have destroyed the worlds I created, and I have spread war and blood over the earth. To regain you, I have committed every crime and every evil. With a wave of my hand, I have destroyed everything that prevented our union. How many times, weeping, I called out to you and you did not recognize me! I assumed different forms and aspects to remind you of me, and you cast me off. I left my Divinity for you, and I descended into the depths of pain and misery because I believed that, by making myself like you, I would be able to regain you. I taught you laws and doctrines, and I wanted to die as a God for your love. But even then, you did not recognize me! For us to reunite again, it was necessary for the Divinity to become human, but it was also indispensable for Humanity to become divine, oh, my Redeemer!”

The Initiate Knight's [Dame] intuition is covered by a thick veil: he [she] does not understand. He [she] speaks:

“How could such suffering and evil be necessary for us to arrive at what we once were? Why that descent and ascent; why this descent of the Divinity to Humanity simply to return once again? Why the crime, the horror and the misery?”

“Because, in fact, Knight [Dame] you have never ceased being what you were, nor have you ever been what you believed you were. Like a childish game, the Divine Being, Light Eternal, wishes to mirror itself in the shadows. There is no descent or ascent. The only thing that exists is the illusion that light produces when it reflects itself on the shadows. The worlds are no more than the shadows of God. Neither good or evil, nor crime or pain exists. Those who die are reborn, and the evil of today is the good of tomorrow. When a civilization is destroyed and falls, it is because a new and better one is being born. When a criminal's weapon opens the chest of a human being, it is because a new and more beautiful body is waiting. Moreover, no one can touch the spirit, nothing can hurt it. It suffers, experiences pain, changes and transforms itself

as long as it believes it does. But as soon as it recognizes itself—at whatever point or stage of the path it may be--and can affirm, “I am That”, illusion disappears, and it is reintegrated to its pristine Divinity and Essence.”

“Then, I now wish to destroy the illusion once and for all; I want to be what I am.”

In the heavens, now covered with the cloak of night, there shines the eternal symbol of the Circle and the Cross: the Sacred Ankh.

The lips of the immortal spouse have united with the immortalized one.

The echo of the Knightly Hymns resounds through the Universe.

“From the beginning I knew you; from the beginning I loved you. We two were One.”

When one fixes one’s eyes on the mountain top in order to glimpse the silhouettes of the Perfect Lovers, one discovers that they have disappeared.

Only the brilliant flame rises above the Mountain top.

The Christian Military Orders

10th Teaching

When we look at the teachings of Amon in the context of human beings who are struggling and suffering, instead of within a sheltered setting, we discover countless Schools in the first century BC. These were no longer purely devoted either to the concept of “Not Being” or of “Being”.

One of these two tendencies prevailed in every School. In general terms, there was, on one hand, the doctrine of Amon—polytheistic, Platonist, idealistic--and on the other, that of Aton—monotheistic, Aristotelian, materialistic.

These Schools were founded by “Dissenting”, that is, by dissenters. But this word should not be taken in a pejorative sense, for the dissenters were great beings, many even Initiates. They split from older, purer Schools, and founded new ones by mingling their own ideas with those of their old school, as well as other schools. Further dissension, in turn, led to the founding of more schools.

It is noteworthy that so many of these schools flourished shortly before and after the life of Christ. It should also be emphasized that these schools were eclectic in nature. They laid the groundwork for the spread of Jesus’ extraordinary work.

Before Jesus, Solar Initiates came to earth in a form that was inaccessible to the ordinary human being. Jesus, on the other hand, came to redeem everyone.

The same happened within the secret societies: they were once almost impenetrable.

First of all, Jesus showed that he was Human, and he made the great sacrifice of offering his Body. He also showed, by resurrecting and rising to heaven, that human beings could raise themselves to God; that hope should reach everyone; that each person could attain God.

However, due to the esoteric nature of its doctrine, Christianity would not have become so widespread if it hadn’t had such an effective disseminator as Paul of Asher.

Paul gave people ideas which were considered beyond their reach. He cast pearls before swine, and he sowed generously. He was aware that he would have to pay with his own blood for the diffusion of these secrets. But this did not silence him. He knew that his Karma would only be carried out once he said everything he had come to say.

Paul took Christ as an example, as a human who serves his purpose. But he always referred to Him as the Redeemer, and made no mention of the Human.

Paul also offered a glimpse of an even greater possibility beyond the union of Human Beings with their Savior: something like a Buddhist Nirvana.

His work was threefold:

1st) He opened a channel between Divinity and Humanity--all Humanity. This is symbolized by the wound in Christ’s side, from which blood continuously flows. As a result, esoteric societies were no longer as hermetic as before. There was always some way of accessing them, like through the secrets they allowed to escape; for Christ’s blood has poured over the whole world.

2nd) He established that humankind was saved by the Redeemer’s act. Human beings no

longer needed to wait for Grace, since they now know that the Divine has become flesh for them as well.

3°) He was a true forerunner of what is still a hope today: the union between polytheism and monotheism; that is, the purity of the polytheistic conception along with the accessibility of all humans to the concept of monotheism. In synthesis, the Redemption of all humankind.

Polytheism as the guardian of esotericism

With the rise of Christianity, and its claim to being a monotheistic religion, it absorbed the esotericism which had been widely introduced into monotheism during the Ptolemaic dynasty.

In the first century AD, pure esotericism had made its way into Gnosticism, which denied the supreme authority of the Old Testament. After the Gnostic Church was destroyed, esotericism was adopted by the Orthodox Church.

Thus, we can see that Christianity received an immense spiritual wealth.

The influence of Christianity became very powerful, both through Christ's redeeming sacrifice, made available to people by Paul, and through the doctrinal work of the Church Doctors, especially St Augustine. Its expression, the Church, acquired enormous economic and political influence. But from the sixth to the tenth century, it declined spiritually.

The Church needed a renovation. The Crusades led to a favorable and direct renewal, as well as a later more hidden and deeper renewal: the moving of esoteric societies to Europe.

The knowledge preserved in the East was brought by seven great beings. They introduced an institution hitherto unknown in Europe: the University.

In those times, each University was dedicated to a single branch of knowledge: Bologna to law, Salerno to medicine, etc.

The Military Orders, especially the Teutonic Order, brought many secrets with them, and hence, much knowledge.

Thus, at that moment, there were two great spiritual forces in Europe: the Church and the newly arrived secret societies. The former was somewhat in decline spiritually, and the latter was now strong after being largely inactive for a millennium.

The monotheistic conception of the Church had changed somewhat: the personal God, the One that could be reached by the human being, was no longer Christ but the Church, or the "Dogma". The contact with esoteric societies would revive its spiritual content.

This unity of action reached its climax with the election of a great mystic and occultist monk, Gerbert of Aurillac, as Pope, under the name Sylvester II (he died in 1003).

The two suns, Amon and Aton, were thus united.

In this way, the college of Cardinals became a true college of sages.

It was necessary to instruct the clerics. The common cleric had no contact with the people:

they led their pious lives for themselves alone. The priests knew just enough Latin to say the Mass.

The Knightly Orders could not undertake this task because their members were laymen. This is when a cardinal--later Pope Gregory IX--organized a religious Order whose rules were partly adopted from the military orders.

As in the military ones, this religious Order had three categories, corresponding to the three ways in which the Church fulfills its Work: Mystical, Apostolic and Teaching. The Monasteries would need schools.

The one chosen for this work was Francis of Assisi because his character was most suited to these plans, and he had a reputation for holiness as well. Gregory IX quite craftily managed to approve constitutions written down by Francis. Francis himself was not satisfied, but the Pope's purpose was undoubtedly useful. The success of this Order, as well as others founded later, is well-known.

This union between the Church and the esoteric orders seemed to be invincible. But a latent division arose with the rift between the papacy and the empire. Some esoteric societies sided with the former, others with the latter. As a matter of fact, neither of these tendencies was pure. Those supporting the papacy tended to be idealistic, upholding Not Being as the supreme expression. During the Middle Ages, this tendency characterized the Nominalists: "Everything is a single Voice". The "realists" rose in opposition to this.

The level of relevance acquired by esoteric societies is especially highlighted by the fact that they negotiated a settlement between Pope Boniface VIII and Emperor Frederick II that Hermann von Salza, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, mediated. Later on, in 1544, Albert Margrave of Brandenburg, the last Grand Master of this Order and first duke of Prussia, especially fostered education in every city of the Prussian state. He also founded schools where Latin was taught, as well as the Koenigsberg Gymnasium and its University. In his court, he had German books printed (catechisms, etc.), and he gave freedom to servants who wanted to dedicate themselves to study. He also guarded the treasure of the Esoteric Teachings inherited from his religious brethren, sharing them only with a few wise men. Esoteric Associations were thus born among the Lutheran ranks. These Associations remained very hermetic, and preserved a magnificent document in the "Chemical Nuptials" by Valentin Andreade, supposedly the founder of the Rose Cross.

The Court of Catherine de Medici

11th Teaching

The Esoteric Orders weakened due to the suppression of the Military Orders, the subjugation of other orders, and the Inquisition's destruction of all psychic research. However, they assumed a new form in the alchemists of the Renaissance who took refuge in various European Courts, especially in France.

Catherine de Medici gathered these alchemists around her, thereby enabling esoteric knowledge to be preserved.

With boundless ambition, Catherine de Medici planned to restore the grandeur of the royal house using whatever means necessary—good or bad. She was an authoritarian and fatalistic woman, who allowed neither Catholicism nor Protestantism to guide her. She only bowed her arrogant head before an astrolabe, magical mirrors, and geodesic circles. Always enigmatic and mysterious (and often guided by the occult sciences), she could be good, bad, or cruel. She was alternately or simultaneously wife, mother, and dictator. Free of any of the characteristic physical or moral weaknesses of her gender, she possessed the highest qualities of a leader of State.

Even though Catherine was trapped between Huguenot republicanism and Catholic tradition, she preserved the throne of the Valois by employing skills which are still envied by able politicians. She was a strong authority, inflexible and clairvoyant. She made quick decisions, impervious to ambushes, insults, and the dreadful measures used against her. She even exclaimed in a letter to De Godes, “the more dead, the fewer enemies”. This phrase clearly captures her character. She was a woman who claimed the honor of being Queen-Mother over all feelings.

Catherine was not overtly flirtatious. Devoted to her husband and children, she is not known to have had any lovers. She was tender with her children until they reached an age where they could use her feelings for them to undermine her authority. She quickly suppressed those feelings when her children became able to rule. However, she faltered with her son Henry III, who repaid her deep affection with ingratitude. From then on, she had only one ideal: the throne of France—her dignity, her pride, and her duty as well. The scepter embodied all her joys, despite the daily struggles and the perpetual back stabbings she both dealt and received. Formed in the context of the revolutionary mob, Catherine blended well with the Medicis. In the midst of the hatred triggered by the despotism of their father, these fiery siblings were political activists who struggled from birth.

Men brutalized Catherine. At 9, while she was a prisoner in a convent, Battista Cei suggested that she be tied naked between two battlements on the city wall of Florence, and exposed to the cannon fire of its besiegers. This proposal was not degrading enough for Bernardo Castiglione, who tried to close the discussion by suggesting that she be released among the foreign soldiers to be raped and dishonored. Considering these circumstances, why would Catherine have ever considered that the beauty of existence was found in human goodness, generosity and mercy?

Catherine was not happy in her marriage. For Henry II, she was no more than a means of continuing his bloodline. He completely devoted his loving sentiments, tender admiration and submission to Diane of Poitiers. Catherine was a mandatory prop imposed by the political demands and concerns of the throne.

In order to maintain the goodwill of her husband, Catherine learned to live in peace with his mistress. Meanwhile, Catherine was obsessed with her own sterility. Initially, this led her to place herself in the hands of the Court's physicians. Their ignorance caused her to throw herself into the arms of the great mysteries. Her attraction was a throw-back from both her family and pedigree. Along with consulting fortune-tellers and the tarot, she combined all kinds of magical beverages and medicinal potions.

Just when everything appeared futile, Giovanni Fernel, a relentless and wise doctor, entered her life. With conviction and selflessness, he had sacrificed his wealth, pleasures and health to the medical science and mathematics of his era. There were so many sick people—both rich and poor—visiting his house, that sometimes he ate standing in order to continue listening with great patience to their concerns.

The remedy Fernel prescribed—thought to be continuous cohabitation for a period—proved successful. After 10 years of marriage, the royal couple's first child was born. They eventually had 9 more children.

During the first years of her reign, Catherine passively endured her rival Diane of Poitiers. However, all jealousy was overcome when she became a mother. She retreated into the duties of submissive wife and devoted mother. But after the Saint Quentin disaster, when everyone was losing hope, she reappeared on the scene. She knew how to restore their flagging energy, and use her vivacity and eloquence to extract a hefty sum from Parliament. In a single day she completely won over public opinion.

Catherine's whole power lay in her faith that she was predestined, and that masters were sent to guide her. Nostradamus had a great influence over her.

Catherine was dealt a hard blow when Henry III had her friends, the Dukes of Guise, murdered. It so affected her health that she fell ill and never recovered. On January 15, 1589, surrounded by her servants, she succumbed swiftly and relatively painlessly to pneumonia.

Contrary to custom for the famous at that time, she was buried with little fanfare. Twenty years would pass before her lead coffin would be transferred to its royal resting place—a tomb built under her own orders and her ever watchful eyes—in the Basilica of Saint Denis.

Henry III well understood the tremendous loss caused by Catherine's death. Fortunately for Catherine, she did not live to witness the collapse of her entire political work, which occurred only months after her death with the downfall of the Valois.

What can we say about a person whose life was so turbulent? Dominated by the desire to rule, she was equally full of intrigue and diplomacy. She could be indulgent and implacable, superstitious and gullible, Catholic and Huguenot, timid and astute, and ever impenetrable. But nevertheless, we cannot fail to notice her undeniable qualities of energy, keen intelligence, and

clairvoyance. These enabled her to remain fearless in the face of danger and the vagaries of political and religious battles, even as they led her to turn to astrological oracles and magicians to deal with her fears of her fellow human beings and the future.

But her greatest merit is that she allowed men like Nostradamus, Cornelius Agrippa, Girolamo Cardano, the Ruggeri brothers, and others, to develop around her.

The Astrological Oracles

12th Teaching

The most important astrological oracles in the mid-sixteenth century were Luca Gaurico and Nostradamus. Both were part of Catherine de Medici's court, and closely involved with the Medici family.

Luca Gaurico was a distinguished astrologer and mathematician whose scientific work was well known. The erudite philologist, Julius Caesar Scaliger of Padua, was one of his students. Gaurico was born on March 12, 1476, in Giffoni, in the Kingdom of Naples. Owing to his family's poverty, his career took off slowly. He needed to earn his living by giving lessons to the children of the great lords. He later studied judicial astrology (the study of the influence of the stars on a person's destiny), a science to which he contributed a new method of horoscopic observations.

Gaurico's fame spread quickly because so many of his predictions proved true. The most important figures of the Italian courts consulted him. Unfortunately for Gaurico, Giovanni II Bentivoglio, tyrant of Bologna, was among them. He wanted to know his destiny as head of state. When Gaurico informed Bentivoglio that he would die exiled from Bologna, the prince condemned him to five rounds of torture, the results of which Gaurico suffered from for years. But when Bentivoglio opened the doors of the city to Pope Julius II in November 1506, he himself provided Gaurico with the opportunity to prove his divinatory art and win even greater popularity. This happened when Pope Paul III asked Gaurico to prepare his horoscope. With surprising precision, Gaurico predicted exactly how and when the Pope would die on November 20, 1549. Without waiting for the prophecy to be fulfilled, the Pope rewarded Gaurico for his wisdom by endowing him with the bishopric of Civita Castellana and conferring upon him the stature of Knight of Saint Paul. Four years later, when the Pope did die, Gaurico resigned his titles and returned to Rome definitively.

Among Luca Gaurico's voluminous writings, a curious one stands out: "Lucas Gaurici geophonensis episcopi civitatis tractatus astrologicus, in quo agitur praeteris multorum hominum accidentibus proprias eorum genituras, ad unguen examinatis..." published in Venice, 1552.¹

Astrologers were always well received by the Medici family. Therefore, it is not surprising that Catherine's parents consulted Gaurico. In addition to predicting the torture and death of John Hamilton, the archbishop of Saint Andrews, Gaurico also predicted in 1493 that Catherine's great uncle, Giovanni di Lorenzo de Medici, already a cardinal at age fourteen, would one day become pope. Twenty years later, Giovanni was crowned Pope Leo X.

Gaurico predicted that Giulio de Medici, another of Catherine's uncles, would fight many political battles, be extremely promiscuous, and have many children. As is known, Giulio de Medici did become Pope (Clement VII), and was famous for his conflicts with Charles V and Henry VIII of England, as well as his affairs with women which led to 29 illegitimate children.

When Catherine became the Dauphine of France, she wanted to know her husband's fate.

Gaurico summarized his findings following the rules of triplicities of Diocle and Avicena. He predicted that the Dauphin would one day wield the royal power; that his rise to the throne would be marked by a dramatic duel, and that another duel would bring an end to both his reign and his life. Gaurico even specified the type of wound Henry II would receive during that duel. Since the prince's social position made the life-threatening danger of a real duel unlikely, the famed astrologer's prediction received little credit. But that did not keep Gaurico from insisting upon the truth of his statements, which were published in Venice in 1552, seven years before the fatal duel. He also warned the King personally in a letter, where he updated the prediction with a wealth of details. He recommended that the King "avoid all single combat on an enclosed field, especially around age 41, for at that age you will be threatened by an injury to the head which could lead to blindness or death." Henry II was hardly concerned by the prediction.

However, Catherine became obsessed with it. She sought help from the most famous sages of her time, both to check Gaurico's calculations and to ward off the forecasted danger. This led her to Gabriele Simeoni, a Florentine astrologer and mediocre writer. But Simeoni was no more than an ambitious pedant, and as such, he concluded that Gaurico's assertions were trivial, and their real purpose was to maintain Catherine's blind trust in astrological science.

Michel de Nostredame, better known as Nostradamus (his Latinized name), was another noteworthy figure in Catherine's court. From the 16th century until the present day, he has been the object of the most zealous admiration, as well as the harshest insults. He is the author of the unusual text *Centuries*.

With over 80 editions, the mysterious *Centuries* epitomizes the workings of an original mind. It has never lacked naive or clairvoyant readers. In spite of the superstitions and exaggerations of his devotees, Nostradamus is undoubtedly worthy of being included on the list of the great intellectuals of the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Jean-Aimé de Chavigny and Balthazar Guynaud.

Nostradamus enrolled in the school of medicine at the University of Montpellier at 22, and was the Chair of Medicine for many years. He maintained a close friendship with Julius Caesar Scaliger.

While Nostradamus was practicing medicine, he became passionate about astrology. He studied old literary texts, translated ancient astrological documents, and corrected many astronomical calculations. He attained such renown that the Duke and Duchess of Savoy became interested in him and consulted him at his usual residence in Salon-de-Craux².

In 1555, Nostradamus published his first three *Centuries*, to which he added the first fifty-three quatrains of the fourth *Century* and an epistle to his son, Cesar de Nostradamus. That same year, having heard people talking about *Centuries* and Nostradamus' predictions concerning him, Henry II was surprised by the similarity between this prophesy and the one that Luca Gaurico had made. On August 15, 1555, Henry called Nostradamus to the court to verbally confirm the omens of death. The following translation attempts to capture the form and tenor of the diviner's words:

The young lion will overpower the old,
In an unusual duel on the fighting ground;
His eyes pierced through a golden cage,
Two blows, now one, thus [break] to die
A cruel death.

As enigmatic as this wording may seem, events later proved it to be precise in its details and as accurate as Gaurico's.

Gaurico died on March 15, 1558, after which Nostradamus became a permanent part of the court of France as astrological doctor. He soon became a counselor to King Henry. This enabled Catherine to develop affection for Nostradamus. She frequently consulted him about personal matters and Henry II's affairs of state. Following the astrologer's counsel, she continued to increase the surveillance and safeguards necessary to protect the King. The two predictions of her husband's death had become Catherine's obsession.

Meanwhile, violent political-religious debates were taking place in Parliament. There were attacks on Henry II for his relations with Diane de Poitiers, and for the occult practices of his wife. This led to the arrest of Du Bourg, Du Faur, three other counselors, and a president. An arbitrarily elected commission were the judges of these magisterial prisoners. On the orders of the Bishop, the Inquisitor of Paris, and Henry II, any accused and declared heretics were severely punished. While all this was going on, preparations for the royal celebrations of the marriage of Henry II's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of France, to the King of Spain, and that of his sister Margaret to the Duke of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, were coming to an end.

At nine in the morning on June 30, 1559, Henry II announced the opening of tournaments with the sounding of bugles. After lunch, he declared that he would take part in the tournaments as a defender in a combat to be carried out on a closed field, and ordered that his weapons be brought out. After fighting M. de Savoy and M. de Guime, it was the young count, Gabriel de Montgomery, Lord of Lorges' turn. After three rounds, the King asked M. de Vielleville, who was up next, if he would allow him to take revenge by breaking an additional lance with the Count de Montgomery. The King and the Count encountered each other near the middle of the run and broke their lances on each other's chests. Once they were at the opposite ends of the field, they were supposed to drop their lances and return at a gallop to encounter each other again. In accordance with custom, the King dropped his shattered lance, but Montgomery did not. The Count approached rapidly pointing his splintered lance, which lifted the visor of the King's helmet. The wood entered Henry's right eye and exited out his ear.

And so, quite accidentally, in an "unusual duel", the prophecies of Gaurico and Nostradamus were fulfilled. On July 10, 1559, after eleven days of agony, King Henry II died.

Thus Catherine de Medici, who was always so worried about the future, received two accurate predictions about the time and nature of her husband's death. And, if Nostradamus was a clairvoyant whose prophecies were revealed through magic mirrors instead of an astrologer, or if, as some authors assert, he was an illumined seer, the fact remains that what he and Gaurico, his predecessor, prophesied came true in precise detail.

¹“Luca Gaurico (Lucas Gaurici), who was the Bishop of the city of Geophon, wrote an astrological treatise (1552) in which he examined in great detail the past accidents (unfortunate events?) of many men (’s lives) through their horoscopes.

²Now known as Salon-de-Provence

The Schools of Magic

13th Teaching

The Science of Magic which existed during the Renaissance and Catherine de Medici's time helped to bring about the restoration of the Esoteric Orders.

The excitement, curiosity, and intellectual credulity of the period were on display in the salons and cafes of Paris. Patrons who swarmed there ranged from trustworthy occultists to charlatans. Among them was the fortune teller Eteilla Alliette, rumored to be a student of the Count of Saint-Germain.

According to the Baroness of Oberkirch, Adepts, prophets, and everything concerning them were more numerous and attended to than ever before. The conversation focused almost exclusively on occult themes which permeated every idea and sparked every imagination, even the most serious ones. Nostradamus' "Centuries" was reread and snatched up by readers.

Luchet calculated that more than 30 European princes, especially Nordic ones, belonged to different lodges. Even Czar Paul of Russia was a fervent adept of the occult sciences.

The name "Illuminati" was given both to the Theosophists, who discarded all theurgic magic, and the Kabbalists, who continued (in perhaps a slightly fantastic form) the traditions of high magic. Each trend had its outstanding figures: Swedenborg and Lavater among the Theosophists; Dom Pernety and Martinez de Pasqually among the Kabbalists. The latter two appeared to be the most zealous preservers of Kabbalistic practices. Claude de Saint-Martin belonged, in turn, to each of these movements.

Swedenborg, a universally known sage in his own time, belonged to the most important scientific academies of Europe. A philosopher and mystic, he described his visions and journeys in the other world, and published accounts of his interactions with angels. The groups and lodges he founded would later become part of the Swedenborgian Church, the first spiritist sect.

Dom Pernety, former Benedictine, was an enthusiastic navigator who accompanied Bougainville on his journey around the world. Following the orders of his Kabbalistic oracle—The Holy Word--Pernety left Berlin and traveled south to settle in Avignon.

Lavater was a Protestant pastor who was so tolerant that he sent to "the good Mother Catholic Church all those who did not find peace in the Reformed Church." He was an enlightened and benevolent person, as well as a benefactor of many immigrants during the Revolution. In his writing on "physiognomy", he revisited a very old thesis: that it is possible to know "the inner human being" by looking at physiognomy. He had a tremendous influence on the great beings on the earth.

Mirabeau writes: "I have seen Lavater's letters to sovereigns where he addresses them as 'my dear', 'my dearest'. And I have seen the sovereigns' responses—admiring, obeying, and honoring him. Their supporters revered him as if he were a God upon the earth." Lavater himself described a ceremony of the lodge of the illuminists of Copenhagen which was led by

Charles of Hesse. That ceremony shows that the lodge's work was not directed by a Kabbalistic oracle, but by a phosphorescent luminosity which used conventional signs to respond "yes" or "no" to questions posed by adepts. This enabled them to make decisions inspired by heavenly intervention. In 1754, the Rosicrucian Martinez de Pasqually instituted a special Masonic rite: the Elus Coens. The most celebrated of its lodges were the Filaleteos (alchemists), the Illuminati of Avignon, and the Academy of true masons of Montpellier.

Martinism

14th Teaching

The Esoteric Orders took hold in the 18th century.

Martinez de Pasqually stands out as the modern prototype of a Founder of an Esoteric School.

Pasqually left Portugal at 18 and made the first of several trips to the East. He is thought to have been on the Pamir plateau in Turkestan. At 42, he made his final trip, after which he began his mission as a Founder. He would continue this work for 10 years. During this period, he filled France and its neighboring countries with secret societies which would be the backdrop of the great revolution that was brewing.

There are only two known manuscripts of his teachings. One of these, the "*Treatise on the Reintegration of Beings into Their Original Estate, Virtues and Powers both Spiritual and Divine*", was composed of several parts. Instead of dealing with the actual state of affairs, its objective was to reestablish the human being and all beings in general, to their original state. Pasqually's thought is masterfully and unequivocally distilled in this treatise.

The first school in France was founded in Bordeaux. It offered a set of symbols, with complementary theurgical practices, which were used to obtain the assistance of Superior Entities in the development of the plan of evolution. These theurgical acts were very important in this school. Taken as a whole, they formed a true cult, whose final aim was to lead human beings to the reintegration mentioned above.

The purpose of this contact with Higher Entities was to enable human beings to hear the Word within them. According to Pasqually's disciple, Saint-Martin, his Master possessed great powers in this respect.

Pasqually's life is surrounded by mystery. He arrived at a city without anyone knowing how nor why, and he abandoned without anyone knowing when nor how. He sought neither fame nor riches. He lived very modestly, and although he often suffered hardship, he did so with dignity. His home was always open to members of the Order who visited Bordeaux. From there he went to Lyon and later to Paris, founding lodges in both of cities.

Saint-Martin became a member of the first lodge, which was founded in 1754. He was brought to the lodge by several garrison officials who belonged to it.

Some of Pasqually's most famous Parisian disciples were Cazotte, M. D'Hauterive and the Abbot Fournie.

When the Abbot met Pasqually for the first time, Pasqually cordially said: "You should come with us because we are good people. You will open a book and look at the first, middle and last pages, and after reading only few words, you will know all it contains."

"You will see all types of people walking in the street. They don't know why they are walking, but you will."

Pasqually's daily instructions were to unceasingly elevate oneself to God, continually practice virtues, and work for the good of all.

Abbot Fournie tells of how he heard the Master's voice, who had died two years before, while he was praying to God to help him endure his great internal trials. He turned toward the voice and saw Pasqually with his parents, who had been dead for several years; his sister, who had been missing for 20 years, and a being that was not part of the human race. A few days later, he saw the crucified Christ. This vision would return, but this time the living Christ was emerging from the tomb. In a third apparition, the glorious and triumphant Jesus was walking before him, accompanied by the Virgin Mary and various persons.

His visions continued. However, he kept silent because of the disbelief and mockery of his contemporaries.

When the revolution of 1789 broke out, Cazotte extolled the principles which fueled it, but in their purest form. Its later excesses triggered intense fears within him. Using the same sincerity and expansiveness he used in his religious proselytizing, he imagined thousands of ways to combat these excesses. The discovery of these ideas in his correspondence with Ponteau, a secretary of the civil list, led to his first arrest.

Cazotte took great interest in the occult studies of the Order. He especially valued the spiritualism of Christian writings, and the Gospels, because of the ethics they contained.

In Lyon, M. D'Hauterive undertook three years of study with his great friend, Saint-Martin, another student of de Pasqually. They focused on astrology, magnetism, somnambulism, signs and ideas, the beginning and origin of all forms, the Holy Scriptures, etc.

Marquise de la Croix, another outstanding student, developed mystical tendencies which allowed her to achieve a state between ecstasy and vision.

The disciple Willermoz is believed to have seen his master Martinez de Pasqually in a vision in which Pasqually warned him that the revolutionaries were coming to seize all the books and teachings that he kept under his care. This gave Willermoz a day in advance to rescue two great chests in which Willermoz had jealously guarded the wisdom which would later be the basis of the secret societies, spiritism, etc.

There were many outstanding members in the so-called "School of the North". Among them were the Prince of Hesse, Count Bernstorff, the Countess of Reventlow, and the celebrated Lavater, who later achieved great fame in Switzerland.

Reventlow and Lavater later renounced the school, possibly due to the influence of the Baron of Liebigsdorf. They followed a purer mysticism that was heralded by Saint-Martin. This mysticism differed from his master's, Martinez de Pasqually, whose schools mostly focused on theurgical practice.

When Pasqually's mission in Europe ended, he set sail for the island of Santo Domingo. He died there in Port au Prince in 1799.

The direct disciples of Pasqually continued the Order's work until 1782. At this point the Martinists made an alliance with the Order of the Strict Observance of the Baron of Hund. This order was inspired by Saint-Martin, and directed and organized by the Baron. The archives for the creation of the Reformed Rite had been entrusted to Willermoz. Their business continued until it was cut off by the Revolution in 1789.

Martinez de Pasqually could be described as a gust of air that swept over Europe. It prepared for the French Revolution by creating the necessary mindset. He was the creator of a type of secret society which would later be dedicated to politics, such as the Carbonari of Italy, the Illuminists of France, and later the lodges, like the Lautaro, which brought the revolutionary ferment to America. Meanwhile, the societies founded by his disciple, Saint-Martin, purified the ritual and sought only knowledge and Divine Union.

Saint-Germain and the Rosicrucians

15th Teaching

The Esoteric Schools were clearly divided into two schools before the French Revolution. The Rosicrucian schools were completely hermetic, and supported the Crowned King (the monarchy). The more liberal schools favored the populist movement and free thought. Saint-Germain was the last of the inaccessible Rosicrucian mystics.

Although Saint-Germain had an average physique, he was very seductive—at least according to Casanova, who was supposedly a Rosicrucian as well. Casanova described him in the following manner: “Few could be better-spoken than him. Although his tone was forthright, it was so well-cultivated that it never offended. He was a sage who spoke most languages fluently, and was a great musician and chemist. He was a handsome person and a master at obtaining the submission of all women”.

Saint-Germain was a master of languages as well as an accomplished violinist and harpsichordist who amazed Rameau with his playing. He was also a painter whose colors were so brilliant that Latour and Van Loo often asked in vain for his secret.

The Countess of Adhemar’s “Memoirs”, published as “Souvenirs sur Marie-Antoinette” (Paris, 1836), claim that Count Saint-Germain provided important services to France during the life of King Louis XV. For some 20 years, he was as active in other European courts as he was in France. He was often not seen for long periods of time, but when he reappeared he looked the same, still having the appearance of a man in his forties. The Countess relates how astonished she was when she met him in 1891. By then, she was an old woman, but he still looked like he did in his forties, as fresh and young as when they first met.

The Count was a great alchemist who knew the process for artificially crystallizing carbon. Being an Initiate, he knew the science of transmuting metals.

But let’s examine the Count’s other side. He was not just a showman. His science, his seductiveness, his power, were not solely for impressing the public. He used them to his advantage to carry out a more serious plan.

Under Choiseul’s prudent inspiration, France continued to follow the political agenda of King Louis XIV, who had been the first to grasp the danger of the newly forming Prussia. However, England favored Prussia, and Saint-Germain tried to persuade the King to side with the English and offered to negotiate peace with that country. King Louis XV, counseled again by Choiseul, understood this was a mistake, and officially disavowed Saint-Germain’s commission. But the King was so influenced by Saint-Germain that he again heeded the Count’s advice and employed him as a spy.

Why was this great dilettante and alchemist working for the King of Prussia? The Rosicrucians themselves hold the answer. The Count was a Rosicrucian and was trying to convert the King.

Word has it that Saint-Germain gave the chief of police the key to solving the mysterious disappearance of the Procurator of Chatelet in 1700. Following the Count's directions, they found the corpse. Saint-Germain may have used this opportunity to tell the King: Become a Rosicrucian and I will answer your questions about how I managed to resolve these affairs. Had the King listened to him, the throne of France would have been saved and Louis XV would have been an Initiate King.

As a Rosicrucian, the King would have been informed about hundreds of different matters; he would receive the secret of the philosopher's stone and alchemical formulas. But as a Rosicrucian, he would have to obey its Leaders.

Saint-Germain was appalled at the turn of events. Day by day, he predicted what would happen with the certainty of someone watching from behind the curtain. Saint-Germain warned Marie-Antoinette as well. He tried, though his advice went unheeded, to undermine the counsel the King received from courtesans such as Maurepas. This advice could, and ultimately did, lead to the events of 1793 and the Reign of Terror which enveloped France. In retrospect, it is easy to believe that all this was necessary, that France had to pass through this painful trial in order to emerge as the "new" France, in which the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity would reign, or try to reign. But that is not entirely accurate. It only became absolutely necessary at the very end of Louis XV's reign. By then, things had reached such a state that there was no other conceivable option. However, if the King had listened to Saint-Germain's counsel years before, the social change that France had to karmically undergo would have been carried out through an intelligent evolution, instead of a violent revolution.

Rosicrucians claim that the Count will one day return to Europe's public life, though his name and aspect remains unknown. They also assert that he is now living in physical form in a castle in Hungary.

The Rosicrucian Carl Webster Leadbeater reports that he met Saint-Germain in 1901 on the Via del Corso in Rome, and that they talked for over an hour in Parco Pinciano. The Rosicrucians claim that the Initiate Saint-Germain is involved in the political situation in Europe, and is responsible for the spiritualist movements in the world which are developed through ceremonial activity. Among these are the Freemasons and, more importantly, the Co-Freemasons or Scottish Freemasons, spread throughout the world. Their headquarters are in Paris under the distinctive title of *Le Droit Humain*. This group should not be confused with the pseudo-freemasonry called the Adoption Masonry.

The French Revolution and the Liberal Lodges

16th Teaching

In spite of the various prohibitions against them, Freemasonry and its secret reunions significantly increased in France during the first half of the 18th century. The Freemasons were divided into different lodges, many of which flourished in Paris. The Polar Star, the Artist Brothers, the Reunion of Foreigners, and others, were among them. All these lodges studied the ancient sciences, cultivated philosophy, discussed physical and moral problems and practiced an evangelical Christianity.

Other rites and forms of Freemasonry also expanded rapidly throughout France and other countries up until 1700.

Between 1767 and 1771, Martinez de Pasqually passed through France like a meteor and left behind a multitude of purely occultist organizations, such as the Rite of the Elect Cohens, called the Martinists. These foundations later divided into two branches: the theurgists, directed by Willermoz, and the mystics, directed by Count Saint-Martin. Both of these individuals were disciples of de Pasqually.

Later on, in 1781, Cagliostro founded the Masonry of the Egyptian Rite which admitted women.

The Condor was also a feminine Masonic lodge in Paris at that time. This was a branch of adoption, founded in 1775 and directed by the Duchess of Bourbon, that was dedicated to works of charity.

The most prestigious ladies of the court belonged to it, like the Princess of Lamballe, the Countess of Polignac, and even the Empress Josephine herself, who joined in 1804.

Groups of nobles and sages entered these different lodges in spite of legal vetoes and excommunication by the Roman Church. Sometimes, Princes themselves directed the lodges, such as Frederick the Great of Prussia. Their purpose in gathering together was to study various philosophies, as well as the mysteries of the Kabbalah and the Bible, and the physical and theoretical research on alchemy. Some lodges were also actively involved in social issues.

In the French lodges, the intelligentsia and nobles gave birth to the idea of the French Revolution. This idea would be implemented in the Terror of 1793.

Throughout the 18th century, the center of this unusual activity—simultaneously occult and political—was in Paris. People like Cagliostro arrived there from Germany, where the abundant Masonic sects worked in fellowship. It appears as if the final blow to the old order would be delivered in Paris. This was the place where mysterious people came and went. These individuals astonished the world with their secret science: curing the sick, sowing gold and diamonds, and later counseling the King, the ministers, the Cardinals and the Queens. They disappeared, died and reappeared. As a reminder, the Rosicrucians advocated magical methods, the use of the Philosopher's stone (which appears to have been entrusted only to Rosicrucians

of the second category such as Cagliostro), the gift of languages, the obligation to change country, name, custom, and even to stage their own death. All this increased their influence and allowed their members to subtly work towards a well-defined purpose.

Saint-Germain stands out among the precursors of the French Revolution. His mission appears to have been to provide the Encyclopedists with a basis for renewing ideas and laws. He also tried to save the French monarchy. He remained close at hand, watching its steady downfall, ever ready to come to its rescue. However, circumstances were unfavorable, and he could only carry on with his comforting mission of counselor.

All these groups seemed to have the same goal: cultivating the mind and the spirit. However, with regard to social matters, there were two fundamentally different lines. Contemporary Freemasonry, the divisions of Martinism, and the Rite of Cagliostro preferred the constitutional framework and the liberty and equality of all beings. These groups, taking other forms, worked in different countries under different names: Carbonari, in Italy; Hunters, in Canada; Lautaros, in South America. These were the centers of freedom for the people.

By dedicating themselves to life's problems, these groups strayed away from the spiritual ones. In the end, Freemasonry itself shifted from liberalism to positivist nationalism and from there to materialism. The tree had borne its glorious fruit of freedom and could now die.

But other Esoteric Schools wanted to maintain the ancient spirit of select individualism, of the superiority of spiritual activities over material ones, of the heritage of kings and initiate priests. These schools wanted to revive and follow the traditions of the Templar Knights, and they were inspired by Saint-Germain.

In Paris, the Freemasons were called "Gathered Friends" and had selected among them a group called the Filaleteos (truth-seekers).

Consequently, Cagliostro refused to attend the Masonic Convention of 1775 in Paris unless all the writings of the "Gathered Friends" had been burnt beforehand.

Inspired by Saint-Germain, the "Gathered Friends" devoted themselves to a severe reform. Under the direction of the Baron of Hund, they founded the Order of the Strict Observance in 1751. After the Baron's death, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, a close friend of Saint-Germain, directed the Order.

Another person from the pages of 18th century history captures our attention: the Countess d'Adhémar. Her delicate figure was framed by the over-sized, pompous fashions set by Pompadour; her quaint smile was highlighted by her powdered wig and painted beautymarks.

Some characters that play very important roles for humanity remain in the shadows, forgotten. At a certain point in time, they enter almost unnoticed onto the world scene, holding a lamp which casts light on some great event. They then disappear as silently as they appeared. Some souls have the special mission of educating, loving, stimulating, guiding or working inwardly in a Great Work which others bring to a happy close. The Countess d'Adhémar was such a person.

As mentioned above, little is known about the Countess. The Count d'Adhémar held a variety of important posts in different European courts, including Ambassador to the Court of England. His wife accompanied him everywhere. But the Countess' true character and real inner orientation are unknown. What we do know about her is based mostly on assumptions.

But one indisputable fact illuminates her life: she was a friend of Count Saint-Germain. She called him, in a fanciful yet respectful tone, "the Miracle Man".

The Countess did not follow the democratic tendency of the court nobles who flocked to join the Freemasons. She was a staunch enemy of the new ideas. As a consequence, she was highly regarded, though not favored, by Queen Marie-Antoinette.

Like the Count of Saint-Germain and the Baron of Hund, the Countess d'Adhémar was a fervent Catholic. These three did not wish to separate themselves from the Church because they wanted to reestablish the ancient Order of the Templars.

Of course, the Countess was unaware of Saint-Germain's highest goals. Besides wanting to save the throne of France from the great disaster, he also visited all the courts of Europe, searching for the King who would be Initiate King of the United States of Europe, the King of kings.

Somewhat frivolous and credulous, the Countess became involved in Saint-Germain's projects without ever completely recognizing the role she played. However, all this was nothing more than an idealization of an impossible golden age.

The Revolution and the popular movement took hold in France and, gradually, in the world. And these great beings disappeared into the shadows.

One day, when the Countess d'Adhémar was old and no longer able to leave her couch, a strange visitor entered her room. Those tired, half-blind eyes could not distinguish what was standing amid the shadows. But, as if in a dream, she glimpsed her visitor: it was the Count of Saint-Germain, with his usual aristocratic bearing and his life-long youthful aspect. The Countess was moved. She well knew what he had prophesied to her. She knew that this was the sixth and last time that she would see him, and that her end was near.

"So...?" the Countess opened the conversation with her trembling voice.

"So", the Count continued, "it is over. We have failed."

"Failed? The Bourbons are back and France seems to be redeeming herself."

He laughed. He was not looking at France. He was looking at the future and the world. He saw the beautiful century of freedom which lay ahead—all flags fluttering in the sun of the peoples' magicians.

"No, Countess; we are done. The Initiate King has died. I am returning to my homeland, (rather, 'my heaven'), and my cohort is accompanying me. I am here to take you with me."

And while the flags of that century of peoples' liberation fluttered in the May sun, the ancient Initiate and his faithful followers set off for his promised homeland, his heaven.